

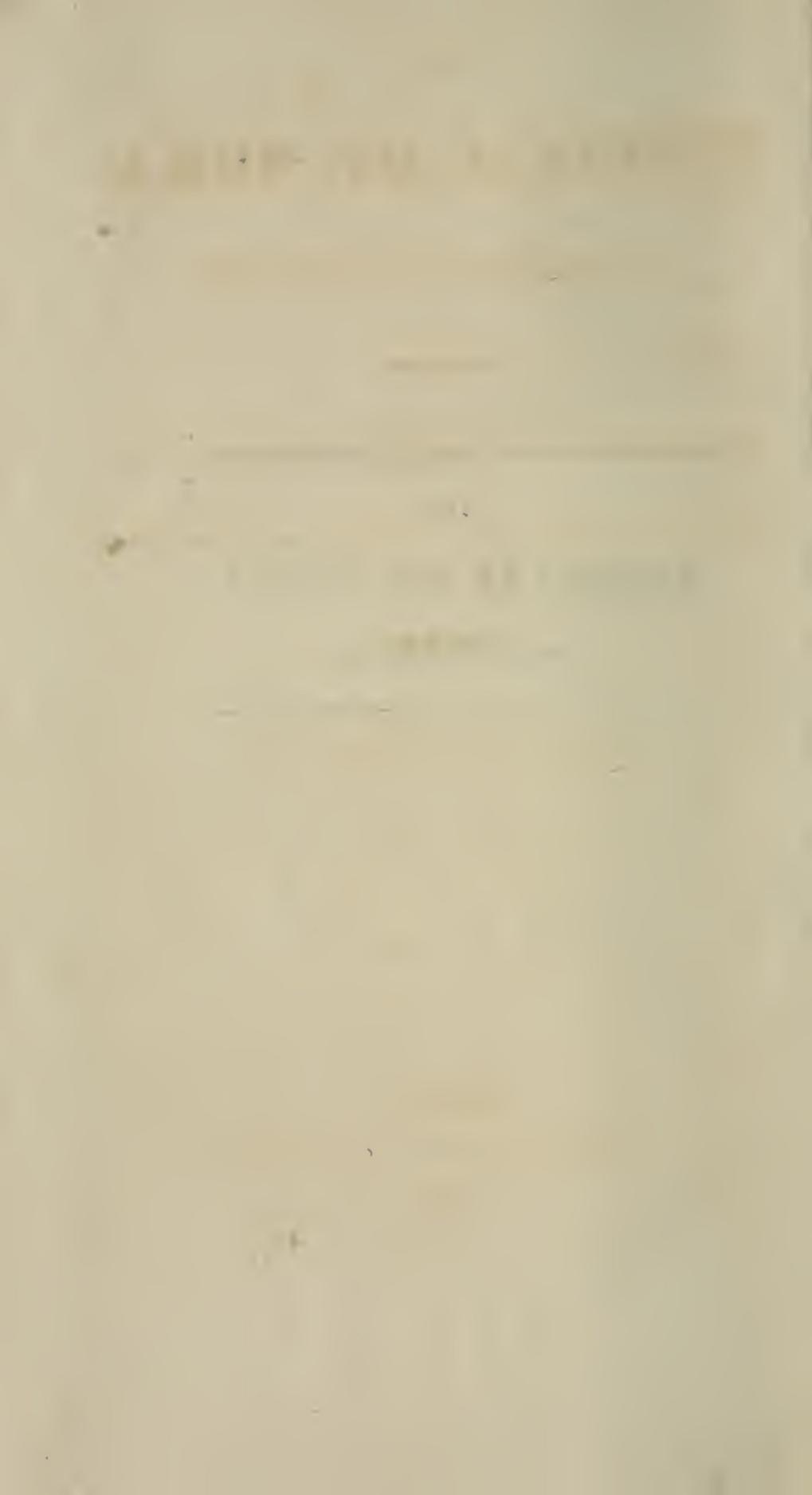
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THE
FESTIVAL OF MORA.
A ROMANCE.



THE

FESTIVAL OF MORA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.



BY LOUISA SIDNEY STANHOPE,

AUTHOR OF

MONTEBRAZIL ABBEY, THE BANDIT'S BRIDE, THE CRUSADERS,
&c. &c. &c.



The drone sleeps;
The bee, labours out fruit and honey !



IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE FESTIVAL OF MORA.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Virtue's anch'rage, firm and stable, breaketh
Not her moorings : though billows rage and foam ;
Though clouds lower, and angry winds arise,
Riding midst the stress and jar of hostile
Worlds, her little bark outlives the tempest.

SIGRIDA revived, but it was to anguish more acute, to misery far more bitter than before; to suspense almost maddening, to grief almost subduing. In vain the vile hirelings of a viler master strove to pacify her mind, to argue her out of the belief of having seen her father, to persuade her that the accidental resemblance of a stranger had alone wrought on her feelings. Alas! the dim eye, the wan cheek, the languid step of Ladislaus, was

no illusion, no conjured vision of fancy, no self-created torture: in the darkness of night, as in the noonday beam, did his measured tread, as he crossed the court-yard, live in her brain, surrounded by his guards, dignified in the midst of calamity and insult.

“ Yes, it was my father, my own father,” she would shriek out, and then humbling herself to her persecutors, on her knees, with hands uplifted, and streaming eyes, would she supplicate for succour. “ To my father’s dungeon—only bear me to my father’s dungeon : suffer me to creep into the darkened corner; suffer me to share his straw and his chains, and I will bless your clemency.”

Firmly did she resist all of consolation, all and every effort to cheat her into peace: it seemed as a new violence to nature, as an outrage to feeling, her father, suffering the extremes of hardship and adversity, enduring all of malice and persecution, herself surrounded by luxu-

ries, living beneath the same roof, yet pampered with indulgence.

“No, no,” wildly pushing aside each gilded offering, “I will share the hardships, I will partake the coarse fare of my father, or I will die.”

Steadfastly maintaining her resolve, during the day dry bread and cold water was her only sustenance: at night, spite of entreaty and menace, forsaking the downy couch of indolence and ease, would she stretch herself upon the hard floor, pillowing her head with her hand, and watching and weeping until morning. Sometimes, snatching short intervals of forgetfulness, she would dream of Rust-goden, of her home, of her dearly prized comforts; sometimes, shrieking and struggling, she would start up, and fervently bless God it was but a dream, for she had seen the paraphernalia of death, and her father led out to execution.

It was the fourth night from the day in which she had beheld Ladislaus march-

ed a prisoner into the fortress, as she sat alone in her chamber, gazing on

“The floor of heav’n,

Thick inlaid with patines of bright gold,”

and watching time’s drowsy motions in the shrill chime of the tardily revolving quarters, that she saw a tall figure, closely enveloped in a dark cloak, glide swiftly and silently across the court-yard. It seemed to have emerged from beneath the arch of the entrance-gate, and it made direct to that side of the building in which her chamber was stationed. Scarce conscious of the motion, she crept still closer to the casement, trembling with cold, and agitated with novel and vague emotions. The moon, long shrouded in a cloudy canopy, now darted a bright broad momentary beam; it fell upon the flitting figure, and the next instant, she lost it and the figure together. She held in her breath—she pressed her hand upon her beating heart—she almost heard its throbings: the silence was profound; it seemed as

the trance of nature; the wind hushed, the very sea so still and calm that its murmurs scarce rose into sound. Suddenly, the creaking of a door, and the tread of advancing footsteps, spoke it no spirit of the night, no idle phantom of imagination: the footsteps ceased at the door of her chamber, and the next instant, the lock yielding to the trial, the same dark figure stood before her. Awed beyond all power to speak or cry for help, Sigrida, clinging to the wainscot, marbled almost into stone, stood with her eyes wildly resting on the intruder. He wore the garb of religion; the cloak, and the cowl, and scapulary of a Franciscan monk.

“Peace and good-will, my daughter!” he whispered, and Sigrida fell panting at his feet. “Collect yourself,” mildly pursued the man of God. “In me there is no deception: I am, as this habit betokens me, a poor brother of St. Francis, diligently labouring in my Master’s vineyard.”

“ And I—I—” sobbed Sigrida—“ I am a destitute, wretched, lost being, without a friend to succour or uphold.”

The monk laid his cold hand on hers; he pointed to the starry firmament. “ The God who rules yon innumerable worlds,” he solemnly pronounced, “ beholds each warring atom who here dares cavil at his ordinances: none who possess the blessing of a pure conscience, can be quite destitute, quite wretched, quite lost.”

“ Oh, father! surely, the bleeding victim of the crimes of others, the suffering, the —”

“ Need not despair,” interrupting her, “ if their own heart acquit them.”

“ Blessed hearing! you would revive what has long been dead within me; hope and trust.”

“ Yes, and I would direct you where true joys are to be found,” rejoined the holy man; “ I would lead you to Him, to whom ‘ a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand

years.' Child of disobedience, murmuring slave of earth, who are you, that the darkness of your own narrow foresight should tempt to rebellion in the sight of heaven?"

Sigrida could not speak; she raised herself upon her knees, and bowed her head in conviction.

"I come to serve you," pursued the monk, somewhat softened; "though first, I would enquire, whether you are here against your will?—whether compulsion chains up the gate of liberty?"

"Compulsion the most despotic, malice the most deadly. Shrieking, struggling, in the darkness of night, they tore me from my home; they dragged me hither; they—they—" Sobs and tears checked utterance.

"Poor child!" murmured the monk—"I will save you; under heaven, I—" Sigrida snatched his hand, and kissed it with grateful fervour. "Under heaven—" and piously he crossed himself—"I will

be the active agent in rescuing you from the fangs of vice. But who are you? and where is your dwelling?"

"I am the daughter of a persecuted man; a good, a virtuous man, holy father, whose sole crime is patriotism."

"A Swede," said the monk.

"A Swede," sobbed Sigrida, "whose hopes lie buried in the ruins of his country."

"Unhappy child! yet is there comfort even in a case like yours, for neither calamity or sorrow is of your own seeking; you have outraged no duties, you have violated no laws; more sinned against than sinning, you are here a living testament of the crimes of others. Be at peace—be comforted: that all omniscient Power, 'in whom we live, and move, and have our being,' wills not the fall of innocence. Oh no, my daughter! ere morning break, strengthened by His unerring arm, I will convey you far from the fortress. A boat lies moored among the rocks below: here

is the key of the low postern opening to the sands: without suspicion, without molestation, we will pass from hence; we will escape; we—”

Sigrida interrupted him with a start of wild horror—“ I cannot—I dare not quit this fortress,” she exclaimed.

“ The monk looked stedfastly, sternly in her face. “ Bear in mind, there is One whom you cannot deceive,” he solemnly pronounced; “ One, whose searching eye, can pierce every intricacy of your dark and hidden thoughts. I am but His meek and erring disciple: but mighty to punish, as well as to pardon, He will avenge the indignities offered to His servant.”

Sigrida trembled in every limb—she threw back her dark hair—she bared her fair face to the scrutiny. “ Father,” she faltered, “ read you ought of hypocrite in my features?—ought of hardihood in my eye? That God, who knoweth your heart, and my heart, who seeth that we are but

sinful dust, sifteth and weightheth the motive, which man finds too hard to penetrate."

"There exists no motive which can authorize braving the threat of ruin and dishonor," rejoined the monk. "Rash girl, if heroism, or pride, or vanity, or ought of the deceitfulness of sin, lurk in your bosom, pluck it thence; wrestle with the tempter; pray for a new heart, for a lowly spirit."

"I pray for heaven's mercy on my woes, for strength and resignation in my wrongs," faltered Sigrida: "on earth alas! I find nought save persecution and suspicion."

"If I wrong you, may heaven pardon me," meekly articulated the monk; "but we here see through a veil darkly; we are here all subject to the infirmities of the flesh. My poor child, I would but bear you hence—I would but convey you back to your own home—I would but restore you to your own father—I—"

“ Oh no, no !” again interrupting him, “ my father lives in a dungeon : shut out from light and air, from hope or comfort, one persecutor lords it over both.”

“ Here,” asked the monk, and his pale cheek waxed paler.

“ Yes, here,” said Sigrida, softening into tears. “ Four days ago, I saw him a prisoner in the court-yard :—ah ! judge then, holy sir, can I quit the fortress ?—can I purchase freedom with a life so dear ?”

The monk stood silent and abstracted, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes bent upon the weeping girl : suddenly starting, “ your father is now a prisoner within this fortress,” he exclaimed, “ and your own innocence is doubtless the intended ransom for his preservation. I see it all—I feel it all.” Sigrida could only weep. “ That skin of snow, that eye of fire, that fatal, fatal beauty !” pursued the monk—“ Alas ! that man should endanger his own soul, that he should dare the

denouncement of eternal wrath, for a lure so perishable ; a mere flower, sweet and fragile, bright and brief, as the blossom which droops and dies beneath the first hoar-frost. My child—my poor sorrowing child—I will pray for you ; I will labour for you : and more than I, the gracious, the beneficent, the holy being, who living but for acts of grace and charity, dispatched me hither on a saving errand, she too will toil out your deliverance!"

" And my father—my dear, my suffering father," implored Sigrida, casting herself on her knees ; " in mercy, think of my father—entreat her for my father."

" She would fain spread her saving mantle over all who suffer," feelingly rejoined the monk. " Fear not ; preserve your fortitude ; place your trust in God ; and though to-morrow bring back your persecutor, the machinations of wickedness shall fall."

" To-morrow," repeated Sigrida, shuddering—" Jesu Maria ! to-morrow!"

“ I had hoped, ere to-morrow, to have removed you beyond his power—to have placed you in safety,” pursued the holy man, “ but nature and necessity war against human counsel: your father’s life is threatened, and to exasperate a powerful foe, would but provoke his fate. You must remain, my daughter; you must even gain time by temporizing with your tyrant. I must quit the fortress, now, this very hour, but my thoughts, and my spirit, will linger near you; when in my cell, when in my devotional duties, I shall picture you, desolate and alone, with no seeming prop save heaven.”

“ Alas ! and must you quit me?—must you leave me, thus helpless, thus wretched ?” sobbed Sigrida.

“ I must go to save you,” said the monk: “ if I live, my child, you shall see me again. Humble yourself in prayer; petition grace and favor; and like unto the prophet Daniel, in this den of vice and crime, the mouth of the lion will be stopped.”

"Stay yet a moment," urged Sigrida—
"I would question of my cruel enemy—
I would ask—I would learn—I—" She
ceased, for the sound of voices rose upon
the stillness.

"I must away," said the monk: "if
seen, if discovered, my power to aid may
cease. Bless you—bless you, my daughter;
may the Virgin Mother of Jesus,
plead for you at the Throne of grace!"
and placing his spread hand upon her
head, the next instant he quitted the
chamber.

Although still

"Tangled in the fold
Of dire necessity,"

the benediction of the monk fell like oil
upon the harassed spirit of Sigrida; her
feelings were hushed, her mind more
tranquil; she felt not alone, for the eye
of heaven was on her, the servant of hea-
ven labouring for her deliverance.

"We are told," she murmured, as she
softly stole to the casement, "that the
powers of evil cannot prevail when grace

lives in the heart. Oh, God of omnipotence and mercy! who readeth all my thoughts, and knoweth all my actions, stablish me in thy laws, strengthen me in thy all-seeing wisdom!"

She saw the monk pass as before across the court-yard, his colossal shadow lengthening in the moonbeams, until pausing, he seemed to vanish beneath the gate-way. Bitterly she felt it as the departure of a friend; but it was sorrow, not repining, which saddened her cheek; it was reliance, not despair, which filled the sigh of her bosom. "I shall see him yet again," she mused; "zealous on the mission of benevolence, he will return—he will restore me to my father—he will restore my father to freedom."

The birth of a new day found Sigrida slumbering on the floor of her chamber, serene and calm, for her thoughts were guileless, and her hopes holy: she considered the visit of the monk as a visible sign of an interposing Providence; and

clinging to the beam of grace, with a prayer trembling on her lips, for the health and preservation of her father, she had wooed the Lethe of repose, satisfied—

“ That oft some guardian pow’r,

Attends unseen, to save the innocent.”

Refreshed and strengthened, she awakened to exertion and to courage; a maiden rose blushed upon her cheek, and hope kindling anew in her eyes: she had thought of the monk; she had dwelt on the beneficent being who had dispatched him on the errand of philanthropy, until fancy, decking her as an aerial spirit of the sky, endowed her with almost preternatural power: at her approach, persecution seemed to cease; the chains of slavery to change into the light and silken ties of grateful friendship; the rayless dungeon into the open expanse of unobstructed space; health and energy to dapple again the wan cheek of her father; and the calm and peaceful comforts of their own humble home to hold forth se-

curity and contentment. It was a dream of the senses, a vision of sanguine reliance, which faded not away, even when her officious attendant obtruded on her solitude.

"What will my lord say," asked Ursula, "when he shall hear of this misjudging penance? In truth, sweet lady, the storm of his anger will fall heavy on all; for may he not suspect us of relaxing in our duty?"

"Your lord returns to-day," said Sigrida, fearfully.

"Yes, to-day, lady; nought but necessity could have kept him thus long from the fortress." Sigrida only sighed. "My lord," significantly pursued Ursula, "will doubtless hasten with all diligence, for love humbleth even a conqueror to entreaty."

"I would it could make him just and generous!" said Sigrida: "what pity that his only aim is to be feared!"

"You mistake him—you greatly mis-

take him," eagerly rejoined her attendant: "in the field, he may wish to be feared; but your love, lady, he would purchase with the destruction of a world. You know not how you have stolen upon his senses—how he worships you in absence—how zealous, how anxious he is for your peace!"

"Let him prove it," exclaimed the indignant girl; "as yet I can decipher nought save selfish passion."

"How prove it?" questioned Ursula; "how convince you that he lives but to do you homage?"

"By unbarring the prison of my injured father, and restoring me unconditionally to his protection."

"Alack, lady, you speak the language of mere heroism! Think you, is it human nature, to relinquish that for which we have long sighed? My lord loves you, and far readier would he part with life. If you had only seen him, when you lay burning with fever, and raving

with delirium, you would be satisfied, that in his eyes, the whole universe is not half so precious as your safety."

"I would I had died!" said Sigrida, mournfully.

"Then would my lord have died also," replied Ursula, "for he could not have survived the stroke. He lived at your door; he partook of neither rest or comfort; he burdened heaven with prayers for your recovery; he——"

"Ah! better to have prayed for his own sins," interrupting her; "better to have deprecated the vengeance of Divine wrath. I fear, more, much more, than even his outrage to me, rankles on his conscience: but 'tis of little import; here alas! his power is despotic."

"Far less despotic than your own, fair lady," rejoined Ursula; "for he withholds not comfort to those he governs, whilst you deny him even the recompense of a smile."

"Smiles, and an aching heart, but ill

accord," remarked Sigrida, struggling with the almost unconquerable disgust of her feelings; "would he crave smiles, let him purchase them by the liberation of my father."

"You are still the dupe of your own fancy, lady; your eyes and your fears have deceived you. Believe me, no Swedish prisoner lingers within the fastness."

"I would enquire the name of the governor of this fortress?" asked Sigrida; "perhaps——"

"'Tis an interdicted subject, lady."

"Where deeds need the covert of disguise, there exists little room for hope——" and Sigrida looked proudly and indignantly at her jailer—"Doubtless, your employer is ashamed of his calling, or——"

"Ashamed," interrupting her, "ashamed of one of the bravest noblest names in all king Christierin's forces: 'tis not a season for gallantry to cower in corners: besides, the brave gen—the—the brave—the—the—" hesitating—"God's truth! I

stand prating, forgetful of my errand. Lady, I came to invite you to the rampart: the sun sparkles like diamonds on the blue wave, and the nipping air will freshen the faded roses of your cheek; besides, 'tis so pleasant, and so healthful, and 'twill cheat sorrow of a whole hour."

"Alas! go where I may, I shall bear my sorrows with me," said Sigrida; "mine is not a destiny to admit of ought of pleasure."

"However we may try to guess, we cannot read our destinies," significantly observed Ursula: "some are bright and gilded; others, marred and broken by their own perverse spirits: yours, forsooth, lady, is cast in roses, and yet would you crowd it with fancied thorns?"

"Tis of little import," sighed Sigrida; "we all feel the weight of our own cares; we all can best tell where most they rankle. In this world it must be so; 'tis a shifting scene; we mere flitting shadows: it will pass away; we shall pass

away ; but the seat of judgment lives beyond the heavens."

"Holy saints, how you talk ! why, lady, one would guess you half a nun."

"I would I were quite a nun !" rejoined Sigrida, "for then I should have nought to fear from man."

"Twould be a burning sin, to cage so much beauty in a cloister, though," replied Ursula ; "prayer and penance is best fitted to age and wrinkles."

"The service of God needs but the purity of the heart," said Sigrida ; "a contrite and humble spirit is our most acceptable offering."

"Aye, but not until beauty is on the wane," urged her attendant ; "bright eyes should never be dimmed with tears, or roses withered with vigils. Why, even Father Dominick, would not award a penance so unnatural."

"Who is father Dominick ?" questioned Sigrida, her mysterious and saintly visitant recurring to memory.

"Father Dominick is a holy man, who labours for heaven through privation and zeal : he wears a hair shirt ; never eats flesh, nor even lenten fare, on fast days ; he visits the sick, gives alms to the needy, mourns with the sorrowing, and prays with the aged."

"And does he ever visit this fortress ?" asked Sigrida, eagerly ; "do his prayers and his counsels ever reach the ear of the prisoner ?"

"I have seen him in this fortress, lady, and doubtless he would shrive a prisoner as well as any other man, for he is famed for universal charity."

"Could he penetrate to the dark dungeon, the straw couch of a prisoner ?" again interrupted Sigrida, her thoughts, her hopes alive to the possibility of her father's rescue ; "could his mission of peace, his calling of divine love, find grace and favor here ?"

"Not unless authorized by a higher power," replied Ursula.

"I would I might see this father Dominick!" said Sigrida, after a long pause; he would teach me patience under every ill."

"Impossible," exclaimed her attendant, fearfully; "on your life, lady, urge not such a request. Father Dominick never visits the fortress now; he—he—in truth, he may be dead: for ought I know: my lord would as lieve see the devil as father Dominick. Promise me, dear sweet lady, never to speak of the ugly monk, never to hint a knowledge even of his name."

"Why should you crave such a promise," enquired Sigrida—"why should a being, so virtuous, and so good, be obnoxious in the sight of your lord?"

"There are reasons, many reasons," answered Ursula; "saints can make no allowances for sinners; they expect all flesh to be as pure as themselves: father Dominick has tamed his own spirit, has put a bridle on his own passions, has tied himself down to briefs and homilies: and

because father Dominick lives in perpetual warfare with nature, and whips, and starves, and scourges all of human will, father Dominick fancies the laity should be as pure, and as ice-cold as himself."

"Father Dominick deals out truth," said Sigrida, "and rending away the subtle colourings of sophistry, shows sin in all its native deformity. Zealous in his holy calling, power cannot daunt, or rank or riches influence; labouring for the soul's health, he would fain share the promised recompense of heaven with all beneath the skies. Oh, that his sanctity could reach me!—oh, that his prayers might bring me consolation!"

"Father Dominick is a scarecrow to pleasure," muttered Ursula, "and I would I had bitten my tongue, ere I had named him. Promise, I beseech you, lady, not to betray me to my lord; and in my turn, I will strive diligently to lighten all your fancied ills."

"My father," faltered Sigrida.

"Yes, and your father also," rejoined Ursula; "my power is not very great, but perhaps I may aid even him."

"Then will you indeed bind me your debtor—" and Sigrida's warm heart glowed in her features. "Oh, Ursula! succour my poor father, comfort my poor father, and the blessing of heaven rest upon the deed!"

"But will you promise to think no more of father Dominick?" artfully urged Ursula—"Dear lady, will you never betray me to my lord?"

"Never," replied Sigrida solemnly; "fear not, however I may think, I will not speak of father Dominick."

"Nor divulge ought that I may ever chance to tell you?" asked Ursula.

"Never—never—I may die, but I cannot be ungrateful."

"I believe you, lady. I too can be grateful—" and Ursula, after the thought of a moment, drew close to the side of Sigrida—"I have a friend, a very parti-

cular, a very dear friend, who is now a soldier in the garrison : trust me, I will learn more of this Swedish prisoner: and now let us descend to the rampart."

"A moment—yet a moment stay," implored Sigrida, her heart throbbing, her spirit rallying with new born hope. "This friend, this particular, this dear friend, can you not seek him now, good kind Ursula ? If you e'er shared a father's love—if you covet the prize of a father's blessing—do not check, do not delay the beneficial intention."

"We must not suffer impatience to frustrate our purpose," said Ursula; "seeming zeal would betray all."

Sigrida could only sigh ; for alas ! policy was a hard, hard lesson, which necessity and misfortune enforced

Close wrapped in a long cloak, and descending by a private path, Sigrida reached the rampart.

The day was bright and beamy ; the heavens cloudless ; and the sea scarce rippled

beneath the light breeze which fanned its bosom: innumerable skiffs scudded o'er its glassy surface; and huge masses, and precipitous rocks, and black and barren steeps, skirting the waves, formed, as far as the eye could penetrate, one bold and picturesque border. Sigrida paused at the extremity of the rampart; it bulged over the flood; it seemed to hang as though in mid-air, tottering among flinty and shelving crags. Yet it was not to hail the freshness, it was not to gather health and strength in the invigorating breeze; it was to gaze upon the huge walls of the fortress, to measure the coigns and the towers which frowned over the prison of her father, to mark the measured tread of the scattered sentinels, and the bulwarks and the defensive weapons threatening wide and universal ruin. “Alas!” she mused, “is it thus, that ungrateful Sweden, turns her strong holds, and her fastnesses, against the legitimate defenders of her honour!—that incarce-

rating her own nobles, she lends all her power, and all her force, to the enemies of her glory ! Wretched—wretched country !” and forgetful of all around, she wrung her hands, and wept in the bitterness of her feelings.

“ Do turn to the opposite side,” urged Ursula ; “ do look towards the sea : that dismal keep—” and she pointed to a solitary round tower—“ is enough to murder all ones spirits.”

“ The keep,” said, or rather felt, Sigrida, and a deathlike shudder palsied every limb ; it seemed as the grave of her father, for doubtless there did he groan out his strength.

“ Trust to me, lady,” pursued Ursula ; “ the sun shall not go down ere I hear of this Swedish prisoner ; and should he prove your father, why then——”

“ He is my father—my own father,” interrupting her ; “ do not doubt—my eyes, my heart could not so deceive me : nay, and I have every reason to be-

lieve—" and Sigrida thought of the visit of the monk as she spoke—" that the hand of heaven was upon me, when I approached the casement in time to see him in the court-yard."

" It was chance—all chance," said Ursula.

" It was a blessed chance then," resumed the sorrowing girl, " for it savoured of salvation!"

" As how, lady?" and Ursula looked doubtfully, almost fearfully towards her.

" I cannot speak what my heart feels," replied Sigrida—" I am content to own, to believe it the mercy of Providence."

" Superstition perhaps," and Ursula smiled as she spoke.

" Say rather faith, and firm reliance on unerring Wisdom. Believe me, Ursula, we derive our life's best happiness from strict conformity to divine law; from trusting, confiding, receiving every ordinance, as best suited to our necessities. I have felt it—I do feel it—and

may heaven grant me patience to the end!" As she spoke, the pious trust she invoked, seemed to soften and qualify every feeling; it glowed in her full orbed eyes; it spread a saintlike placidity over her features: the wind, playing with her silken tresses, bared her polished brow, and the quick flushing and fading tints of her cheek, imparted a fluctuating brilliancy almost too bright for mortality; she seemed as a creature of another world, clinging to Hope's rainbow, yet anchoring her soul on heaven!

Ursula beheld her with mingled wonder and reverence: ah! how different to the beings with whom she had been fated to associate! her heart, her conscience smote her; and for the first time, in her short unthinking life, she shuddered at the guilty snare which she herself had so actively aided in spreading. The neglected counsels of father Dominick had taught a far different lesson: he had exhorted to temperance, moderation, cha-

rity, justice, good-will to all mankind : and as his homilies recurred to memory, as his example darkened the gyves of sin, the rich bribes of power, and all the seductive lures of greatness, dwindled into insignificance. She turned to the unconscious girl.

“Lady,” she faltered, “I would give all and every stiver I possess, I had never known you, or known you earlier :—had it been so, I should not now be, as I am, your jailer and your persecutor.”

“My persecutor no longer,” mildly pronounced Sigrida ; “you will bring me tidings of my father, and that will recompense all.”

“Ah! but it will not restore you to liberty, and to safety ;” and regret spoke in her eye.

“It will give peace to my harassed mind,” rejoined Sigrida ; “for the rest, be it in the hands of heaven. You did not bring me hither; you did not tear me from my home and my comforts : be satisfied,

Ursula, were I to die this night, my parting spirit would bless your new awakened pity."

"Thanks! thanks, gracious lady! This very day will I seek Stromfelt, and if ought of influence live in the name of love, will I glean tidings of your father."

"Your lover?" asked Sigrida.

"He calls himself so," said Ursula, "and we shall soon see how highly he rates my favor. He is a soldier in the garrison, and belike may stand sentinel over the very keep."

Sigrida laid her hand upon the arm of her attendant—"Kind girl! and will you exert your influence for me?—will you urge your lover in my behalf? Would that I had more than empty thanks to offer!—would that——"

"Your prayers, lady," interrupting her—"give me your prayers, I need no other recompense."

"My prayers, and the approval of

your own heart, and the blessing of heaven rest upon you!" said Sigrida.

" As I aid you, may heaven aid me!" solemnly pronounced Ursula. Fear not; if there be invention, and contrivance, and persuasion in woman, I will bribe or tease Stromfelt to my purpose. He cannot deny me, lady, for I will only tempt him to alleviate, not to treason; my lord can experience no harm, in simply satisfying you of your father's safety."

" No; no harm," murmured Sigrida; " neither can it rebel against ought of lawful authority, were Stromfelt to suffer a visit to my father's dungeon: I could not break his chains, good Ursula, though I might solace his drooping heart."

" Alas! lady, if discovered, it would endanger life. You know not my lord; you know not, the heavy, the relentless weight of his anger. Ask me what I can grant, what the artifice of love may encompass, but ask me, I implore you, no further."

"I will ask then to hear of my father," said Sigrida, mournfully, "and I will hope the rest. In this life, Ursula, we never lose sight of hope; no, not even when verging on eternity; it is the wretch's best friend, the only rescuer from despair; it governs, it supports, it lends consolation, midst every frown of fortune."

"May it never deceive your trust!" exclaimed Ursula—"may it strengthen and uphold you in all your trials! Alas! much, I fear, they are heavy ones, for my lord is not a man to relinquish what can minister to his pleasure; prone to command, ruling over thousands, his very weaknesses have gained strength in the submission of others—Ah, lady! may you bosom hope; for much, or I mistake me, will you need the comforter."

"Divine hope! the rock which passeth not away," piously pronounced Sigrida—"the blessed staff which father Dominick would consign to my keeping—the soul's food, the spiritual fount of

strength and life! I am green in years, Ursula, but I have seen much of the sorrows, and the chances, and the changes which chequer this mortal pilgrimage ; I have seen that riches, and grandeur, and happiness, are at best illusive ; that in truth, and indeed, “ through much tribulation, we must enter the kingdom of heaven.”

“ And I have seen, and I do see, that my ways are unprofitable, and full of evil,” sighed Ursula. “ Alas ! you awaken my thoughts to a period when I was other than what I am now”—and tears gathered in her eyes as she spoke.

“ That period can never return,” said Sigrida, “ but the peace of that period may be regained.”

“ Oh ! if I thought so,” ardently exclaimed Ursula, “ I would purchase it with prayers and with tears—I would kneel—I would supplicate it as the best hope of my life.”

“ It may—it will be regained, if your

heart be truly penitent," pursued Sigrida ; " if mourning every dereliction from rectitude, you mould your future conduct by the unerring principles of virtue."

"Lady"—and Ursula laid her hand energetically on the arm of Sigrida—"I once lived in a poor but peaceful cottage—I was happy, and I was cheerful, and I thought I was contented. Those were blessed days, but they are gone." She paused for a moment, then struggling with her feelings—"My father and my mother lived," she resumed, "in humble plenty, ere Denmark poured out her venom over my country ; my——"

"A Swede!" interrupted Sigrida, with a sensation almost of joy.

"Hush, lady ! the very name is treason here. My parents"—and she lowered her voice to a whisper—"were ruined in the general overthrow : and I—I—" her very lips faded to clay—"I fled from the hovel which sheltered their wretchedness ; I trusted—I—I" she hung her head in

shame and woe. “ It was a Dane,” suddenly rallying into exertion, “ a treacherous subtle Dane ; he brought me to this fortress ; he forsook, abandoned, left me, to grief and repentance. ’Twas then that father Dominick found me out ; that he laboured hard to save me : but my repentance was as short lived as my grief ; and his counsels, and his efforts, were alas ! as the good seed, which falling upon a rock, ‘ withered away, because it lacked moisture ;’ it took root for a little season in my heart, but it faded, and was lost in the hour of temptation.”

She ceased—she stole a sidelong glance at her companion : ’twas not disgust, ’twas not contempt, ’twas pity and sorrow which beamed in every perfect feature.

“ Thus fickle, thus wavering, thus fatally unstable,” hesitatingly continued Ursula, “ I was bribed to attend, to aid in the destruction of one who never harmed me ; of one—of—of—of you, sweet lady—of—” Again she ceased,

or at the instant a loud clarion echoed through the fortress ; and ere they could gain the extremity of the rampart, Sigrida, turning, beheld her dreaded persecutor, mounted on a fleet charger, and surrounded by a gorgeous cavalcade, ride into the court-yard.

CHAPTER XIX.

Hear—hear, and bless him !

He gave me succour, and he gave me hope ;
In distress, he gave me solace ; nay, more,
Martyring self-interest, he gave me
Freedom !

THE like glance of recognition, the like glow of reciprocal feeling, shot from eye to eye, from soul to soul ; patriotism, exultation, gratitude, homage, speaking, not in words, but looks. It was a moment of inexplicable emotion, of mingled, wild, rushing, overwhelming enthusiasm ! it propelled one spring, one impulsive acknowledgment—it precipitated the royal Gustavus on the neck of the still kneeling Xavier.

Holy God ! what a moment, for a heart, so wrapped, so devoted, so wedded to country, so anchored on the wreck-

ed fortunes of Sweden ! He, who had, in truth and in spirit, followed the lone wanderings of Gustavus, had mused upon his hardships, had mourned his sorrows, had participated in his wrongs, had brav-ed almost the threat of paternal wrath, in a cause, so dear and so holy ; now to behold that same Gustavus, the representa-tive of kings, the heir of majesty, sheltered, preserved, protected by his uncle ; to feel himself pressed in his arms—to hear his voice, hailing in him, a preserver and a friend ! Did he indeed live ?—did he in-deed behold the same disguised fugitive, who at Rustgoden, he himself had perti-naciously dared to arraign, to accuse of want of submission to divine will ? Yes, it was the like towering port—and Xa-vier's eyes ached as he gazed—the like polished brow, the like silken hair, the like gracious smile, the like beamy look of urbanity and conciliation ! A peasant garb still cloaked the sculptured limbs ; but the black bandage, cast aside, the soul-piercing eyes of fire illumined every

speaking feature : it was the future majesty of Sweden ; it was the brave commander of the Swedish cavalry, the warm friend of the late administrator, the hostage whom Banner had restored to freedom ! So mingled, so varied, so complex were the feelings of our hero, that like an o'erwhelming torrent, they bore down all before them ; exertion, resolution, nay, even speech itself, for many minutes was lost : he still knelt ; he still clung to the feet of the prince and the warrior, every pulse throbbing, every passion swelling high within him.

“ What am I to read in this wild emotion ? ” asked the wondering, doubtful Gustavus. “ Do I not behold the nephew of the virtuous de Stiernhelm ? ”

“ The nephew of de Stiernholm—the son of count Banner—the humble, yet soul-devoted champion of our enslaved country ; ” and Xavier, as he spoke, raised his eyes to the varying countenance of the prince.

“ The son of count Banner ! ” repeated

Gustavus—"the son of my brave, my generous friend!"

"The same—the same, my prince—" and Xavier, with reverence and awe, bowed his lips upon the hand extended to raise him—"the son of count Banner—the son of the governor of Calo—the son of the servant of Christiern; yet laying his strength and his life, an offering to the cause of Sweden. You start, my lord; your looks betray amazement and doubt: believe me, I love, I estimate my father; I prize his worth and his virtues: but my country—God of heaven! to behold my country rescued from the fell tyranny of Denmark, to see her smile anew in prosperity and in freedom, what private claim, what selfish feeling, would I not immolate for such a recompense!"

"Glorious son of an exemplary father! patriot! hero!" and Gustavus viewed him with wonder and with admiration.

"I would aid in the mighty struggle," pursued Xavier—"I would be an humble

instrument in a cause so godlike—I would redeem my country by the sacrifice of my dearest hopes. Here, in Dalecarlia, the first spark of rekindling patriotism burst into flame: here, in Dalecarlia, the bands of despotism, too tightly strained, snapped; and man, roused into action, man goaded to resistance, turned and dared the swords of his oppressors: here, in Dalecarlia, the growing tumult owned birth, which banished the tyrannic power of Denmark in the person of king Eric! O, my prince! there needs but a second Engilbreth, but a leader, but a brave, a renowned avenger, to rouse the powers and the passions of every true-born Swede; but a hero, to direct and to instigate; but a champion, to enroll, and to point to freedom. The myriad who groan in bondage, await but the bright ensample: plant you the pharos, and it will burn, and rage, and flame throughout the land!" He paused—he gazed, anxiously, eagerly, in the face of his

august hearer, as though there to read the future fate of Sweden, every feature tinged with the warm ardour of his feelings, every impuse of soul beaming in his eyes.

“The son of count Banner!” exclaimed the almost incredulous Gustavus—“do I dream?—do my senses mock me? The son of the subject of king Christiern!”

“Of him, whose duty and whose sentiments war with each other,” resumed Xavier; “of him, who owes fealty where his principles cannot approve; of him, who as governor of Calo, held you in bondage; who acting the jailer, who—”

“Saved my life,” interrupted the prince; “who rescued me from the blood-thirsty emissaries of Christiern, and muffed the fetters of restraint in the budding flowers of friendship; who taught me to reverence and to love the virtues and the character of a Danish noble; who studied all of conciliation to extract the poisoned

barb of woe, and aided by his gentle countess, planned amusement and variety, to cheat the leadened wing of time, and lure me from the contemplation of wrongs and violence; who——”

“ My father has told me all,” said Xavier, glorying in his praise, yet anxious to divert the mind of the prince from the late astounding tempest: “ let us of the future, my lord, the past is beyond recall.”

“ Has he told you,” eagerly rejoined Gustavus, “ how he begged me of the tyrant;—how, under the plea of luring me from the interests of Sweden, he obtained the custody of my person;—how, securing me from the murderer’s steel, at Calo he lengthened the chain of detention, and suffered me, alone and unwatched, to hunt and shoot in the surrounding forest? Has he told you—” and a vivid blush died his cheek—“ how, taking advantage of his clemency, I broke limits—I fled—I”

" All, all," again interrupted Xavier.

" No, no, not all; he could not tell you all; he could not even guess the feelings, the maddening spur, which drove me to the seeming forfeiture of honor. Had the prospect of liberation been mine —had the privilege of ransom smiled me into hope—I would have died, I would have mounted the stake, I would have yielded my limbs, one by one to the flame, ere I would have outraged his benevolence: but I was the prisoner of Christiern, not of Banner: I was destined, by the usurper of my country, to waste my strength and my life in bondage, when that dear country lay bleeding at every pore; when ruin and desolation spread itself throughout the provinces. Mighty God! when I heard of the fatal battle of Bogesund, of the fall of the brave administrator, of the annihilation of our charters and our rights, the supineness of inaction became as a blister on my fame; every day of safety, every night of repose,

felt to ban me in the sight of heaven, felt to reproach me of tacit acquiescence in the general enslavement. My brain was on fire; my heart swollen almost to bursting: I could not tamper with the known fealty of the generous Banner; I could not appeal to his justice, or his humanity, because I would not enthrall him with the Nero who governed; I could only dare the tax of ingratitude, and I did dare it as the minor misery."

"No more—no more, my lord," implored Xavier; "there too my father has been explicit."

Gustavus smiled incredulously. "Has he told you, that he pursued, that he overtook me at Lubeck; that spite of disguise, discovering, he dismissed all his followers ere he addressed me? Has he told you——"

"Yes, my prince he has told me all—his overtaking you at Lubeck—his returning alone to Calo."

"And is that all?" asked Gustavus,

the heart-thrilling tear of gratitude swimming in his eyes. “ Did he tell you nought of our conference?—did he bury his generous deeds in his own noble breast?”

Xavier spoke not, but he gazed, eagerly, attentively in the face of the prince.

“ Your father,” pursued Gustavus, “ overtook me at Lubeck. At first he felt indignant at my breach of faith; but he lent a willing ear; he listened to, he sympathized in all my injuries; he admitted the injustice of my restraint, the outrage of public faith, the violation of the law of nations; he bowed his head in conviction, when I recalled the treachery of king Christiern, his wanton spoliation of innocent blood, his tyranny, his barbarous detention of hostages so perfidiously inveigled; he——”

“ My father,” interrupted Xavier, “ could not, would not justify deeds, so opposed to his own principles, so counter to every law of divine rule. Though un-

happily born the subject of Christiern, his honour lies beyond the reach of Christiern's subtleties."

"Your father," rejoined Gustavus, "is the noblest of human beings; a man on whose integrity I would pledge my life, in whose friendship I shall joy to the hour of my dissolution; an ornament to grandeur; a blessing to human nature; a creature, to expunge the turpitude, to redeem, to indemnify, through the bright blaze of his own intrinsic virtues, the frailties of a whole race! He gave me liberty—he gave me his heart's best wishes—he gave me gold to support me in my flight, advice, counsel, caution, to steer through the thorny maze of his own insidious countrymen!"

"Bless him! bless him, heaven!" murmured Xavier.

"Bless him! bless him, heaven!" echoed Gustavus.

The pause was solemn—Xavier stood, with his hands clasped, his eyes upraised,

his every feature glowing with the grateful transport of his feelings ; his heart, his mind, swelling, exulting in the philanthropy of his father.

“ And now,” continued the prince, charmed with the speaking ebullitions of a brave and heroic spirit, “ he gives me, in his son, a zealous ardent friend, to sooth me in my uttermost need, to aid me in my coming projects.”

“ To shadow your pass to glory,” fervently pronounced Xavier; “ to mount with you, step by step, the rugged steep, leading to the emancipation of Sweden ; to anchor strength and life upon a cause, which has—which does—which ever must, rivet, absorb the vital spring of my being. O my lord ! cast but a ray upon the black fortune of our country, give but one glimpse of hope, one smile of promise, and I will cling to it, toil for it, die for it, foster it, amid the wreck of worlds, amid the annihilation of empires.”

“ And count Banner,” asked the prince.

" My father is no stranger to my sentiments," quickly replied Xavier: " he may mourn, but he cannot blame : he knows that the soil of Sweden is to me more precious than the wealth of Denmark ; that the wrongs of Sweden, as a prickly fever of the blood, irritates, poisons, wars against acquiescence and repose : he knows, that I consider my honour and my life pledged to my country—that my country is secondary to nought save my duty to heaven."

" And he does not curse, he does not reprobate the zeal," said Gustavus ; " he does not thunder his anathema, against a cause so decidedly hostile to the ambitious measures of his own sovereign."

" He laments, feelingly laments, the instinctive ties which bind me to a ruined state," resumed Xavier: " could he weaken, could he sever those ties, perhaps he would leave no honourable means untried : as it is, he harbours no alarm, for he fancies our resources too humble to

admit of effort; he believes the spirit of heroism broken, the nerve of innate courage clipped, the hopes and struggles of patriotism engulfed in the general subjugation; he thinks, the mind, familiar with its destiny, sinks into quiet acquiescence, nor conjures the death-daring strife, pointing to, grappling for freedom: because priests and nobles have bowed to the imperious sway of king Christiern's arms, because general panic has scattered the remnant of our forces, because our harbours and our fastnesses have exchanged the golden crowns for the passant lions of Denmark, he believes that the whole land lays prostrate and bleeding, too weak to murmur, too exhausted to renovate."

The prince placed his hand upon the arm of the energized speaker. "The count, your father," he observed "draws his inferences, from his own conclusions, and his own observations. He has seen the perfidy of our primate and his suffragan bishops: and because the church

leans to the arm of power, because the temerity of man, outrages the mandates of a heavenly, to please and minister to the lawless passions of an earthly master, he pictures the taint universal, little dreaming, that the pure garb of religion, too often covers the corruptions of venal hearts. It is not among the rich and the powerful that I would crave succour ! there alas ! the stream is too often tainted, the sway of self-interest, the cravings of ambition, too grossly evident. My friend," and he lowered his voice almost to a whisper, " your father knows not the brave spirits which our mines inhume, neither does he guess the darings of man, when bound in the fetters of tyranny. But first of the brave veteran who gave me shelter in the snow-storm, and then will I fully explain the grounds of my reliance, and consult on our future proceedings. I would ask too, of the sweet maid, who, in a season so desolate, promised me the chrism of her prayers."

" Sigrida," faltered Xavier, and the

heightened colour of his cheek resolved his palpable emotion.

“The lovely peasant girl,” pursued Gustavus, “whose ingenuous innocence, so often outstripped the colder cautions of her politic father.”

“Alas! my lord,” and Xavier struggled down the swelling sigh, “I have not seen, I have not even heard of Ladislaus and his daughter since I quitted Dalecarlia.”

“Not heard,” incredulously repeated the prince: “lacks there supineness and indifference, in a heart so zealous in every other cause?”

“Oh no! not supineness, not indifference,” eagerly replied Xavier, “but circumstances have warred against inclination and aching interest—” and then, without hesitation, he confessed, that the brightest hopes of his youth rested on the love and acceptance of Sigrida.

“May you be happy my young friend!” fervently pronounced Gustavus; “may

the rainbow tints of bliss gild every hour of your future destiny !” and he too sighed, as his hand pressed upon the glowing shadow of the fair Katherine of Saxony which lay hid in his bosom. “ But I would fain learn further of Ladi-slaus. Know you the real name of the patriot? for much my judgment deceives me, if he be not a true and trusty Swede.”

“ My life would I tax upon his faith and his principles,” exclaimed Xavier: “ but though I love him with a son’s love; though I have traced his struggles, and hailed the towering flights of his high darings ; though I have watched the warrior-spirit beaming in his eye, have seen his hand grasp, with religious reverence, the treasured sword, relinquished by the brave administrator but in death; though——”

“ Holy God! the sword of the administrator! the friend of the administrator!” interrupted the prince, and every limb

shook with the ague of unrepressed emotion.

"Yes, he was the friend of the administrator;" rejoined Xavier, "the supporter of the administrator, in the last throes of the flitting soul."

Gustavus dashed away a tear. "Oh, had I known it in that hour of fate which led me to his dwelling! Ill-starred murdered Steno!" and he clasped his hands, and he turned aside his face to veil his feelings.

"No, not ill-starred," faltered Xavier; "say not ill-starred, my prince, for he died in the blessed cause of his country!"

"True, he died the death of the brave," murmured Gustavus, "and may peace rest his spirit! It is for us to avenge his fall—for us to hurl the thunder of dreadful retribution! Tremble, Christiern, tremble!" and the fire of his eye was almost scathing—"for the nerve which guides our arms, the spell which invigorates our efforts, is re-strung, re-invigo-

rated, strengthened, braced, in the still reeking blood of the slaughtered Steno. Would to heaven—" starting from the trance of thought—" I could again behold this Ladislaus, this ex-noble of Sweden, who cowering amid concealment and disguise, sharpens his sword on the whetstone of public grievance! If, as you say, the friend of the administrator, he must be the avenger of the administrator; if, mourning the fiat of universal slavery, he must become the champion of universal liberty; he must lend his arm and his life, to a cause which beggars every other cause—the emancipation of his native land. O that I could infuse, the feeling, the fire which rages here!" and he pointed to his breast and to his brain—" that I could behold one energy, one impulsive leap into exertion and vigour!—that I could hear one spontaneous swell of heart and of tongue!—that I could know every true born Swede, rallying beneath the golden crowns, the

heraldic bearings of his country! Glorious, rapturous anticipation, worthy the freed spirits of a better world!"

Xavier placed his hand upon the arm of the prince; he drew close beside him; he forgot his homage in his energy, or rather, he too bosomed that glorious rapturous anticipation worthy of spirits in blessedness. "That feeling, that fire, lives in the soul's soul of Ladislaus," he eagerly pronounced; "he inhales it with the breath of heaven—he quaffs it on the still blood-stained point of the administrator's sword. I have seen him, my lord, kneel and invoke that sword, as the spur, the goad to intrepidity—I have seen him forget even the father in the claims of the patriot—I have heard him pine for the hour of strife, heedless of the innocent, helpless, lovely being, who clings to his stronger arm for support and succour.

"Know you his grounds for hope?" questioned the prince, gazing steadfastly in his face.

"Nought, I fear me, save the enthusiasm of his own brave spirit," replied Xavier; "sanguine and zealous, he would fain hope even beyond reason."

"Has he never spoken of succour?—has he never hinted dependance on extraneous aid?"

"No, never, my lord: living in seclusion, shrinking from his fellow men, he has dreaded recognition in every intruder."

"And yet," remarked Gustavus, and his smile spoke consciousness, "amidst wilds and solitudes, in disguise and in penury, the lynx-eye of discernment, dives within the coils of the human heart, traces the progress of disaffection, and fans the fire of party: 'tis then that we behold nature, unveiled, despoiled of the subtle coverings of art and courtesy, untrammelled by cold custom, unshackled by colder policy. I have found it so—I can prove it so—I have sought out the industrious and the humble, and from them I have obtained succour; I have

appealed to the rich and the powerful, and from them I have turned away in despair. They, clinging to present possession, basking beneath the sunshine of favour ; they — ”

“ Self, all self,” interrupted Xavier ; “ alas ! my lord, ’tis the ruling principle of man, the buried magnet, pointing his thoughts and his actions.”

“ Be it self then,” quickly rejoined Gustavus, “ if it but lead to emancipation ; if private injury spur to public good, if smarting under the blow, man turns upon his persecutor, though self instigate the struggle, the consequence is glorious.”

“ Ah ! and it will instigate the struggle — it must instigate the struggle,” exclaimed Xavier ; “ pain and violence, and persecution and slavery, must end in revolt.”

“ Perhaps you will deem it self,” thoughtfully rejoined Gustavus, “ when I lay bare my own designs, when I explain the dream of my sleeping and my waking hours : though may heaven grant me

favor," and emphatically he raised his hands and eyes, "as love for my country, triumphs over every other bias!" Xavier bent his burning face; he murmured something of apology, but the prince considerately spared him further. "Listen to me," he pursued, "whilst I detail my past actions, and unfold my future hopes. Nay, I too believe self the main spring in human mechanism; for self, in the fall of the administrator, in the murder of my father, and the senators of Stockholm, goads me on to ten-fold vengeance. I would fain call it public good, but the pungent smart of private injury quickens the spur of retributive justice: hear how closely they are blended: revert with me to the treacherous sophism which beguiled me into the power of Christiern, and then judge, how far my actions partake of the universal taint of selfishness."

But whilst the prince is relating to his attentive auditor the perilous scapes in

his eventful story—whilst on the disastrous past he grounds his bright anticipations of the future—be it my task to unravel the close-spun web of seeming mystery; to explain how, from toiling in the mines of the lord of Oernetz, the royal fugitive became the charge of the curate of Saverdsio.

CHAPTER XX.

As bright, as blazing as a comet-star,
Rare and imperishable excellence
Sometimes lights on earth ! God's bounteous boon,
To teach man what he may be, rather than
What he is.

IN the furtherance of my story, I must now awaken the recollection of my reader, to that epoch, so glorious in the annals of Sweden, when the persevering genius, the almost superhuman exploits of the immortal Gustavus, plucked away the odium of conquest, and restored the hereditary rights of liberty to his native land.

Those who have read the vicissitudes of his bright career, who have marked, the toils and the sufferance, the dangers and the ventures which quick beset his checkered pass to honor, know the sub-

tilties which first lured him into bondage, and the systematic policy which so carefully riveted the fetters of restraint; know, that to the eternal disgrace of Christiern of Denmark, cajoled as an hostage, he was conveyed to the castle of Copenhagen as a prisoner; that denied every indulgence, debarred every comfort, consigned to the merciless agents of a relentless and cold-blooded tyrant, death had quick trod upon the heels of captivity, but for the generous and persevering interference of count Banner. It is not for us then to swell our pages with historic records, to linger over the ingratitude of dependants, the pusillanimity of friends, the darings of courage, the insufficiency of human calculations, the instability of earth-born hopes; to track the mazy foot-steps of the royal wanderer, or thread the labyrinths of art and subtlety: enough for us to state, that disappointed in his reliance, disgusted with the consul of Lubeck, outraged by

the garrison of Calmar, assuming a peasant's guise, and hid in a waggon, beneath a load of straw, he passed through the quarters of the Danish army, and reaching his own hereditary castle of Refnas, bosoming true patriotism, glowing with inborn love for liberty, he dared the dangerous effort of rallying his relations and friends. But there alas! did the emptiness of the world betray itself: he was alone and powerless; he needed succour, and he sued in vain: consternation and despair had changed the Swedish character; all of genuine courage, all of patriotic fervour, all of impulsive freedom, was sunk in pusillanimous submission: for awed by the strides of despotism, he beheld with grief of heart, man, shrinking from the breath of suspicion, forgetting the glory and prosperity of his country, in the minor claim of private interest. Disgusted and mortified, he turned from those who had known him in the brief sunshine of prosperity,

and with a fearless and confiding spirit, revealing himself to the peasantry, besought them to throw off the burden of their oppressors, and break from the Danish tyranny : but there too was he destined to encounter disappointment and insult ; the measure of mortification, unaccomplished, was yet to run over ; and turning from the blunt and uncourtly refusal, he again became a wanderer, journeying through lone and intricate passes, and avoiding all of pursuit, in the solitary dwellings of labour. It was in the mighty stress of heaviest ill, that the fugitive prince was doomed to the bitter proof of human ingratitude—to that stinging scourge which almost divorces man from his fellow : drooping, exhausted, without support, and without resource, escaping, as though by magic, the subtle snares of his insidious foes, he stood a solitary wretched pleader at the grate of the convent at Griphysolm : he craved a sanctuary, but he craved in

vain ; he craved in the name of Gustavus Ericson ; but though the munificence of his own ancestors had founded the holy pile, policy close barred the gate to his entrance. Alas ! he had to learn, that the priesthood doffs not the venal feelings of self-interest ; that under the seeming garb of humility, under the mock farce of saintly show, the hopes and the promises, the dazzling lures, and the painted soul-traps of this world, are altogether omnipotent. The power of Denmark was too potent for even gratitude to rally ; selfishness too subtle, for humanity and common justice to interpose :—he turned from the dastard monks with contempt more than rancour in his heart, and again retreating to the province of Sudermania, the faith of a late servant of his family, revoked the anathema he had almost pronounced against human nature. Quick followed the growing successes of Denmark, the siege and reduction of Stockholm, and the triumphal entry of Chris-

tiern into Sweden; his solemn investiture in the regal power; his vow, on the relics of the saints, inviolably to maintain the privileges, laws, and customs of the nation; and the usual oath, binding the nobility, the clergy, the senate, and the deputies of the provinces, in submission and fidelity. Enriched with the order of the golden fleece, presented by the ambassador of the emperor Ferdinand the second; a conqueror and a lawgiver; feeling too prosperous, too mighty for human ill; believing the insidious whispers of courtiers and of hypocrites, king Christiern, for *two* whole days, smiled on his new subjects; like the sunbeam preceding the fate-fraught tempest, he lured them to security; animosity was forgotten; opposite factions slept amid diversion and recreation: lulled into the cheating trance of peace, the dreadful catastrophe unguessed at, the deadly tragedy, planned and designed, betwixt the tyrant and his minions, rose and broke in thunder. Stock-

holm became the scene of slaughter and of outrage, for the fatal eighth of November beheld her drenched in the life's blood of her senators and her nobles. Under the plea of an ecclesiastical anathema, the absolving solaces of religion were denied, and the rites of holy sepulture prohibited : and Christiern, consistent but in cruelty, wantonly and impolitically yielding to the deadly rancour of his nature, gazed upon the mangled trophies of his fiend-like turpitude, and consuming them in one common pile, scattered the ashes to the winds of heaven !

It was at this gloomy and desolating period, that Gustavus, still concealed within the thatched cabin of his faithful servant, felt every hope and every expectation fail ; that mourning the mortal wreck, he wept with grief of heart, the murder of his father and his friends ; encompassed by Danish troops, baited almost beyond the stand of honesty, yet madly devoted to his country, and pining to free her from

shackles and from degradation, he broke from his shelter; and daring all of individual ill, fled with speed and caution to the mountain wilds of Dalecarlia. Even mid the trackless snows, hope regained her colourings, shooting forth her buds and her blossoms, spite of morasses, and forests, and dangers. Dalecarlia was the *last* province which had yielded to the dominion of Denmark; and might not Dalecarlia be the *first* province to shake off the dominion of Denmark! Gustavus was a visionary as well as a warrior, and he computed the strength, and he dwelt upon the reported character of the hardy mountaineers, until fancy assembled around him, a band, as brave and as venturous as himself. But alas! in dwelling on the future, he lost sight of the present, and the sturdy guide, who had piloted through a toilsome and perilous journey, who had crossed through the whole country of Sudermania, had passed with him between Westmania and Nericia, no sooner

plunged in the dismal solitudes of Dalecarlia, amid bleak and joyless deserts, encompassed by savage and trackless wilds, than with heartless hardihood, he robbed him in the hour of repose, and left him destitute of money, of friends, and of human resources, to wander and to die unseen. Here was a new, a bitter aggravation to the dire extremity of fortune; yet was the mind of the royal fugitive but little fashioned for despair; venturesomely noble, preeminently great, he struggled in despite of ill, and carefully veiling all of past splendour beneath the seeming obscurity of his lot, without a single stiver to bribe the good offices of the sordid, he traversed a mountainous savage region, clothed in the ice-garb of winter, and uncheered by one single solace.

It was in this hour of exigence, day fast fading from the face of the heavens, and the feathered snow, thick falling, threatening a cold and premature grave, that

the beacon-ray, streaming from the casement of Ladislaus, put to flight all of lingering caution, and lured the numbed and perishing wanderer once more beneath the shelter of his fellow man. But though warmed by the social glow of hospitality, though strengthened and invigorated by the kindly cheer of benevolence, disguise and policy became his undeviating maxim ; experience had made him wary ; ingratitude had made him suspicious ; he had trusted, and his trust had proved vain ; he had confided, and that very confidence had been used as arms against himself :—the Carthusian monks at Grifysolm had taught him a lesson of human nature ; and he moved, and he looked, and he spoke, with distrust and jaundiced doubt. The artless prattle of Sigrida might be a siren-wile to sap the heart and the judgment—Ladislaus, the creature of Christiern—Xavier, little proof against the glittering bribe set upon his head : fancy magnified the hazard of his

situation, and at day's earliest dawn, first inditing a hasty transcript of his feelings, he escaped from the lone dwelling which had sheltered his wretchedness, and turning from Rustgoden, once more dared the bleak and sterile heights.

Without shadowing his adventurous footsteps, we next find the little hand of Axel staying him on the verge of the mine, and urging him from the hardihood. The royal commander of the Swedish horse, the future monarch of a mighty nation, seasoned in the school of adversity, and taught by endurance, taught by calamity, becomes the guest of the peasant Ludolph—the partner of his daily toils—the sharer of his limited comforts. Surrounded by a fierce and rude host, plying the mattock, and snatching at every scintillating hope breaking on the fortunes of his country; buried in the womby earth; labouring for Sweden; brooding over her wrongs, and execrating her devastators, Gustavus hailed the lurking

spirit of disaffection, and fanned the spark quick bursting into flame. But fate not long decreed the precious gem to lie in-humed : like the god of day on Lapland ices, his was the fire, to thaw, and melt, and mould his people's hearts ; his was the language to infuse glory ; his was the example to lead to enterprise. Bornstein, the inspector of the mines, stealing upon his slumbers, beheld in his bosom the treasured portrait of Katherine of Saxony, the being who had riveted his young affections, and awakened all the glowing ardour of passion ; beheld the embroidered robe beneath his ordinary vesture, and quick conveyed to the ear of Peterson, his doubts and his surmises.

“ He is a man, my lord,” said the inspector “ of no common habits ; his look bespeaks command, and he bears about him the spell of ruined greatness.”

“ His name ?” asked Peterson.

“ He calls himself Segiswold,” rejoined Bornstein ; “ but names may be as-

sumed, and sinister designs lie hid under their covering."

"What designs?" and Peterson, turning, gazed as though he would fain decipher his inmost thoughts.

"I know not, my lord; I did but utter a random guess. This Segiswold may have been baptized Segiswold for ought I know, but much appearances belie him, if he has been used to herd with common miners."

"Perhaps nature has given him a portly mien," remarked Peterson, "and that bids fair to blind the judgment."

"True," smiling significantly; "but nature bestows not silken and embroidered vests, neither does she tie around the neck, baubles enriched with gems."

Peterson started, and his thoughts and his very soul seemed riveted. "Silken vests—precious gems," he repeated. "Where lurks the original of your picture?"

"In your own mines, my lord, labouring for hire, shaping his pursuits to his fortune."

“ In the mines, say you ?”

“ Yes, in the mines ; in darkness and endurance, out-toiling his fellow slaves ; now starting in indignation ; now, grasping, wielding his spade, as though his hands were used to nobler weapons.”

“ I must see him ;” and Peterson rose from his seat.

“ You will see him zealous and diligent,” pursued the inspector, “ gifted with no common strength, and nerved with an unyielding spirit.”

“ Guess you ought of his former story ?” questioned Peterson.

“ Possibly, some noble, wrecked in the fortunes of his country : count Fradage,” whispered Bornstein ; “ or, perhaps——”

“ Who ?” interrupted Peterson.

“ Some warrior, some mighty chieftain,” concluded the inspector, “ outlawed by king Christiern. But let us to the mines, my lord : we shall find him at his duty, diligent and active, smelting the ore, as if he knew nought beyond.”

"To-morrow," said Peterson, pausing doubtfully.

"Why not to-day, my lord?" urged Bornstein; "one day is surely too long for a noble to endure degradation."

"Be it to-day then;" and they proceeded forthwith to the mine.

The supposed Segiswold, surrounded by his fellow labourers, rested on his spade, as the glare of torches, and the tread of feet reverberated through the excavations: he had cast off the black bandage, which, in the cottage of Ladi-slaus had concealed one eye, and in part his forehead; and now, his dark and wavy hair, contrasting its polished whiteness, his cheek flushed with toil and exercise, his sinewy arms folded on his spade, his towering figure, half recumbent, arrested the roving eye of Peterson.

The impulsive start was mutual, the recognition electric: Gustavus and Peterson had studied together in the university of Upsal: and those who had known

Gustavus, could not forget the port and the dignity of Gustavus ; he was seen but once to be remembered eternally : as the heroes of necromantic story, he was more ethereal than earthly, more of the demigod than mortal : gifted above his fellows, it was his noble preeminence, rather than his successes, which elevated him, as an unextinguishable pharos, to present and future ages !

With a mind thus divorced from ought of grovelling imperfection, with a heart as beneficently kind as his spirit was magnanimous, how could he suspect the seeming smile, the feigned urbanity, the bend of reverence, the look of pleasure, which lured him from the dark abyss of daily toil, opening to him new hopes, and fanning him with new expectations ?— how could he doubt the partner of his hours of study, the gay companion, who, though in years his senior, had joined him in his sports and pleasurable pastimes ?

There is a link, a tie, a chain, extending from youth to puberty, from puberty to old age, which vibrating to the touch, brings the past present, and blots away the lapse of years. Gustavus felt as though again at Upsal, felt his confidence and his trust revive, felt, in the offers of regard which flowed from the lips of Peterson, an assurance of present safety and future aid.

At Oernetz, he hailed all the comforts from which he had so long been banished ; he saw in the wedded partner of his host, a being worthy to be the helpmate of man ; he saw him surrounded by every luxury, living in splendour and ease : and if for a moment he wondered how he had weathered the storm which so fatally had ravaged his country, he bosomed not the suspicion of apostasy, attributing it rather to the capricious favor of fortune than to ought which could impugn honor.

Not once, during the day, did Peterson revert to the wretchedness of Sweden,

to the direful changes which had plunged her in disgraceful bondage; he even sought to wave ought of a theme so ungracious, studiously striving to fix the attention of his guest to the past hours of earliest commune: and the prince, attributing reserve to that delicacy of mind which shrinks from awakening painful reminiscences, was grateful and confiding, little deciphering the glance of melancholy meaning lurking in the dark eyes of Ingleburge.

Night came, and respectful homage singled the state apartment: the cheerful blaze on the hearth, the rich gildings, the ponderous furniture, and velvet hangings, contrasting the lowly comforts of Ludolph's humble cottage—Gustavus sighed, and mentally he prayed a time might come for actions to proclaim his gratitude—Ludolph, unrequited, had shared with him his pittance—Peterson, knowing him proscribed, had dared the threat of death and ruin, to give him rest and

succour! In the one, was charity, genuine and true; in the other, was generosity almost unprecedented! With a heart throbbing beneath the load of favor, with a mind magnifying every show of kindness, musing on the past, the present, and the future, listening to the monotonous murmur of the winds, and picturing sighs and jarring sounds in every rising gust, Gustavus slid behind the velvet curtain of the window, to gaze upon a waning moon, combating with clouds, and chequering with many a fantastic form the frozen bosom of the lake below. As he stood, he heard the sound of horse-hoofs, the harsh grating of a bolt, and the whispering of voices; a light too presently streamed through an open doorway, and he distinctly saw a man, close wrapped in a serge cloak, mount a led horse, and gallop from the dwelling. The next instant, all was hushed, the door reclosed, the light extinguished. He wondered, but he suspected nought

of evil, and weary and confiding, pining for rest and sleep, he returned to the fire. Scarcely had he loosened his hose, and cast aside his coarse frock, when a light swift step paused at the door of his chamber: it was opened with caution, almost without sound, and his hostess, trembling, and wan as a shrouded corse, stood at the entrance. She re-closed the door—she advanced close beside him—she bent her knee in homage—she pressed her hand to stay the heavings of her bosom.

“No rest—no rest, to-night, my prince,” she faltered. “The spirit of persecution is abroad, and flight alone can save.”

Gustavus sprang upon his feet; he had no sword, no arms, yet he looked incased in fortitude. “Warn you of treachery?” he enquired—“tell me, lady, who have I to fear?”

“There is no time for parley,” quickly pursued Ingleburge. “Peterson is the creature of the tyrant Christiern—I de-

voted to the cause of Sweden. Your life is in danger, your liberty threatened. Peterson—I cannot call him husband—with the malice and the subtilty of hell, is now on the road, to denounce, and betray you into the hands of your enemies, to earn the accursed price of blood and honor."

"Peterson!" ejaculated Gustavus, starting from his dream of security—"Powers of heaven! the companion of my years of study, the man, on whose generosity I so fully relied."

"The man who cajoled you hither," eagerly rejoined Ingleburge; "the traitor, who abjured his country for paltry gain; him, who I have sworn to honor, who—But no more: trust yourself to me, royal sir, and all may yet be well."

Gustavus stood, with his arms folded, and his eyes riveted on the speaker: how could he doubt her energy?—how could he doubt her faith? and yet in his eventful pass through life, Fate herself

had combined to jaundice his trust in man ; every reliance had failed excepting Ludolph, and Ludolph knew not the being he harboured.

“ And you lady,” he at length articulated ; “ how can I expose you to the inevitable ruin of detection ?”

“ Fear not, prince,” exclaimed the heroic Ingleburge. “ The plan of a moment is security for both. It shall appear, as though you had suspected, as though you had escaped : no breathing soul shall be implicated. We are arch contrivers,” forcing a smile ; “ remember, the fate of empires, have, ere now, been vested in the hands of a simple woman. Trust to me, my lord, and we will out-plot wiser plotters than Arnold Peterson.”

“ And yet,” mournfully sighed the prince, “ it is but deferring inevitable destiny—it is but struggling a short time longer ere I sink into the toil : and for what would I struggle ?—for what would

I live?" and as he spoke, he sunk despondingly on a seat.

"For Sweden—for a ruined bleeding land," exclaimed Ingleburge, forgetful of all but patriotism, and casting herself at his feet. "Illustrious sir! royal hero! representative of our kings! champion of our hopes! oh, rally back your resolution and your noble daring, give courage, give exertion, give enterprise in *your example!*"

She ceased and blushed, for Gustavus beheld her with reverence and wonder; he tried to raise her, but firmly she retained her station.

"Not yet—not yet," she pursued. "Behold in me, my prince, all Sweden prostrate before you, weeping, supplicating redress and succour; calling upon you to file away the rivets of slavery, to free from the bonds of Denmark; upon you, to wield the sword in our country's defence, to instigate revolt, and general insurrection. Ah! had I a hundred

sons"—and her eyes evinced the fervour of her soul—"gladly would I yield them to the struggle, would I martyr them all in the cause of freedom."

"Glorious, matchless woman!" ejaculated Gustavus; and Ingleburge, covered with crimsom, arose, stepped timidly back, and hung her head. "Would that the like spirit glowed in every breast," continued the prince, "that the like heroism were unanimous!"

"I feel it here," articulated Ingleburge, "in my brain, in my heart; it was born with me; it will die with me: sure, the love of country surpasseth every other love. Grant, O God! that I behold the emancipation of Sweden, and my hopes here upon earth will be fulfilled!"

Dignity, and piety, and courage, seemed to struggle for mastery; her hands and her eyes were upraised, her thoughts and her wishes seemingly divorced from all of terrestrial nothingness. Suddenly starting, as it were, into life, all the im-

portance of the charge, all the necessity for exertion revived. “ I mourn the impotence of our means,” she exclaimed, “ but in you, illustrious prince, would I save a fire-brand, to scathe and exterminate our foes, to drive them back into their own territory, to snatch us from their tyranny: I have a brother—a dear good brother—the friend of the unfortunate ; the friend of Sweden : he is a father of the church ; he lives in a lone and solitary nook, shut out from busy eyes ; he will receive, he will protect you with life: all of soul, unwedded to heaven, is given to our cause : he is a patriot, my lord, and he is a *preacher*.” The look of significance flew from the eye to the heart of Gustavus. “ His doctrines are reverenced, his precepts followed ; he holds a strong empire over the neighbouring peasantry, and he execrates injustice. You must depart, now, this very night ; you must abide with the curate of Saverdsio, and he will bless you, and he

will instruct you, and he will tell you there is no virtue in inanity :—oh no ! we must labour for ourselves ; we must toil in our own vineyard, or how expect to reap the teeming harvest ?”

“ True,” murmured the prince, with a languid smile, “ we are here to work out an inheritance hereafter.”

“ And we are here, to fulfil our appointed stations,” eagerly resumed Ingleburge : “ the priest to pray for us ; the warrior to fight for us ; the legitimate inheritor of kingdoms, to wrest the prize from pirate hands. Thousands are now in secret waiting but the signal to burst from their seeming trance ; impatience marks the actions of the peasantry ; already do they murmur at the excessive, the intolerable taxes intailed upon their privileges ; fain would they shake off the Danish yoke, fain would they break forth into open revolt, were they but headed, were they but instigated by a lawful claimant. Show yourself, my prince ; openly proclaim

yourself, and the sway of the tyrant Christiern, like a baseless fabric, will crumble into dust."

Gustavus arose in all his pristine vigour; his eyes flashing fire—his spirit braced in intrepidity. "Enough," he exclaimed—"all, all that is required of me: nay, and never will I shame to own, the heroism of woman roused me in the moment of despondence! Lady, I commit myself to your keeping—I resign myself to your guidance."

A smile of gratitude and transport beamed o'er the fine features of Ingleburge. "Heaven be praised!" she asperated; and with a graceful bend, "Tarry yet a moment my lord;" and then she hurried from the chamber. Almost with the rapidity of thought she returned. "The pledges of my truth and my fidelity," she exclaimed, spreading before him a sword and fire-arms; "pledges, which secure to you the life of your pilot. All is ready, my lord;" and she tokened silence as she led into the passage.

Grasping the provident bequest, and with a breast throbbing with a thousand mingled feelings, Gustavus, shadowing the footsteps of his hostess, in a few moments, quitted Oernetz, by the same door which had opened a pass to the treacherous Peterson; a man, who currying favor of the tyrant Christiern, scrupled not, in violating the sacred laws of hospitality, to stamp his memory odious to all posterity!

Again do we behold the illustrious descendant of majesty, piloted by the stable-boy, Jacob Jacobson, in the solitude of night, exposed to the searching rigour of a freezing atmosphere, braving all of individual suffering, and flying from treachery and ruin: but spite of the winter's nipping gusts—spite of the chilling slights of warring fortune—spite of the far, far colder blasts of graceless man—his heart still glowing with the love of country, his spirit still labouring to force the road to freedom; every nerve braced in the ven-

ture, every hope anchored on the anticipated enterprise.

Morning dappled the breezy east, and the little curacy of Saverdsio, the humble sanctuary of humility and virtue, broke through its shroud of vapour : the church, and the church-yard, too, quick grew into being ; the misty shadows vanishing, and the mingling uplands, and the heavens, dissolving, and separating, as it were, from each other.

The prince stood at the wicker-gate, whilst the cautious and wary Jacobson stole round to the uncurtained casement of de Stiernhelm : in a little moment some light sand, hurled as a signal, was answered by the appearance of the venerable ecclesiastic ; and the whispered name of the lady of Oernetz was the pass to immediate admission.

The curate read the written document of his sister, but his countenance alone spoke the feelings of his soul ; caution and self-command checking the impulses

of loyalty, and the mere bend and smile of courtesy greeting the stranger.

“ Rest, and welcome,” he pronounced: “ but no rest for you, my honest friend,” addressing Jacobson, “ for your lady wills your instant return to Oernetz.”

“ Aye,” said the hind, with a shrug of meaning, “ I must hie me back, and creep into my own nest, lest my errand be guessed at. I know the wishes of my lady, and I would journey for her through a snow storm.”

“ Your lady felt anxious lest this stranger should wander from the beaten track,” remarked de Stiernhelm: “ our passes, my good Jacobson, are dangerous and difficult, and little suited to inexperienced feet.”

“ I would they might tangle all hostile feet!” said Jacobson. “ Marry! but we have done no good since the proud Danes have stolen into our province.”

“ Alas! we are but paying the tax of our own transgressions,” replied the cu-

rate; “we have sinned in the sight of heaven, and though our chastening be seemingly heavy, light is it compared to our offences.” Gustavus bowed his head in reverence and submission; he spoke not, but his look tokened humility. “Say to my sister,” pursued de Stiernhelm, “that her friend, and her letter, are alike in my keeping; that receiving them with my hand, I accept them with my whole heart: and now, my blessing speed you, and may safety tend your footsteps!”

Scarce did the door close upon the form of Jacobson, when the venerable and silver-haired de Stiernhelm fell prostrate at the feet of Gustavus, his feeble hands grasping the hem of his garment, his eyes surcharged with tears of loyalty, and feeling.

“My prince! my gracious prince!” he murmured, “accept the fealty of a heart, which owns no cause divorced from Sweden; accept the humble services of an old man, whose youth, and whose strength,

joyed in the prosperous fortune of your illustrious ancestor; who, beneath the sway of Suanto Sturius, beheld the olive-branch of peace, grow, and bud, and blossom throughout our land." Gustavus strove to raise him, but he strove in vain, for the curate, firmly resisting his every effort, solemnly continued: "I bow before my earthly master, in homage, in allegiance—God sanctifies dignities, and enjoins obedience and honor."

"'Tis your blessing, father," urged the prince, "your blessing I would fain crave; your blessing on the calling, your blessing on the effort my soul panteth to essay."

"My blessing," asperated de Stiernhelm, "and the blessing of the church, and the blessing of your own upright heart, rest upon you! May your successes be as great as your afflictions have been heavy!—may your appealing voice rally from the lethargy of inaction, arousing all the native spirit of our once

brave and gallant race!—may you live for Sweden; and may Sweden, lightened of her bondage, be grateful for the mighty struggle!"

He ceased, and accepting the firmer arm of Gustavus, arose from his knees, his limbs palsied, his cheeks flushed with the hectic of emotion.

"And will you aid me with advice and counsel?" asked the prince; "father, will you strengthen our cause, with the precepts and experience of age?"

"I will aid you with the nearly spun remnant of my strength," solemnly rejoined the curate: "wedding my waning life to the cause of liberty, far and wide, will I labour to forward the design, without entangling the actor. But I must remove you hence, my lord; I must hem you in from danger and from malice. This dwelling offers no security: here, the infidelity, or the indiscretion of a servant, might produce ruin. The church, the holy sanctuary of religion, be ever

the best bulwark to the hope of Sweden: I alone hold the keys; and under the cover of night, I can there visit, and consult, and plan with you, unmarked by the prying glance of suspicion."

From this period, the royal fugitive sought safety " whence all safety flows." In the little church of Saverdsio, watched by her pastor, and ministered to, and tended with care and watchfulness, he instigated the first brewings of the fate-fraught tempest, which wrought the happiness, and the emancipation of Sweden.

De Stiernhelm toiled with never-slumbering zeal: embarked in a hope secondary but to the promise of hereafter blessedness, striving for the freedom of a groaning race, labouring in conjunction with a mind, all-competent to plan, to encompass, to execute all of mortal daring; he journeyed to the neighbouring villages; he propagated reports and dangers; he fanned the embers of fear, and ministered to the growth of preju-

dice : fresh incursions of Christiern's execrated emissaries, arbitrary taxes, and spirit-breaking impositions, were circulated and believed. Turbulent, and jealous of their rights and their immunities, the peasants already writhed beneath their existing grievances ; and the threatened increase of despotism, inflamed every warrior-passion of their nature : ripe for revolt, goaded by festering injuries, panting for retaliation and revenge, the tale spread from town to town, from hamlet to hamlet ; in every public assembly, in every gathering concourse, the hope of freedom advanced as hatred to Denmark augmented. But alas ! strength coped not with the activity of public duty : the mind of de Stiernhelm was braced to all that was good, and great, and necessary to the prosperity of his fellow men ; but the bodily powers of de Stiernhelm laboured under the debilitating burden of years ; his health yielded to the potent pressure of exertion ; and though he gloried in

the progress of resuscitating patriotism, he soon felt, that spite of the buoyancy of the spirit, the flesh is ever mortal.

It was when suffering under an acute paroxysm of disease, produced by fatigue, that his thoughts flew to the castle of Calo; that joying in the known heroism of his nephew, he felt to turn to him for succour in his present need: to his ear alone would he confide the secret of the royal fugitive; to his heart, and to his prudence, would he submit a cognizance dearer than existence: the prosperity, the renovating honor of Sweden, seemed vested in the safety of Gustavus: preserved, as it were, by preternatural interposition; living through the jar of worlds; snatched from impending death, and shielded from mortal enmity, he seemed doomed to be the avenger and the champion of a groaning land; rising into exertion, and into vigour, in one, the scourge of a barbarous usurper, and the active deliverer of an enslaved people.

With pain, and with extreme hazard, the curate nightly dragged his aching limbs to the holy sanctuary of his illustrious charge; he tried to veil the langour of disease, to lose all of sufferance in the bright anticipation of forthcoming prosperity; he spoke of the growing storm, of the loud murmurs, the eager impatience of the peasantry, their zeal in the cause of liberty, their burning ardour to rebel and to avenge. The time was almost come, when Gustavus might appeal to their feelings and to their passions; when fanning them into vigour, he might cast off his disguising muffle, and stand in all his majesty before them: but de Stiernhelm still bosomed fear, still moved with precaution; dreading the subtilty of the human heart, he dared not tempt a wild and savage multitude with a pledge so precious: Christiern was still preeminent in power, and the treason of a single defalcator, might blast and mildew every smiling promise. Thus dreading the fragility

of his own being, trembling lest the thin spun thread of life should be suddenly severed, shuddering at death, not as a pass to immortality, but as the wreck to worldly speculation ; his own peace anchored on a life of righteousness, yet his spirit clinging to mortal strife ; he dispatched a messenger to Jutland : he wrote —he petitioned the immediate presence of Xavier ;—and Xavier, as the reader already knows, zealous in affection, returned with speed to Saverdsio, to embark in a new enterprise, to fulfil a double duty.

CHAPTER XXI.

Sorrow, like an untimely nipping frost,
With'ring Hope's fairest buds, spares the flower :
It may droop its head and fade, yet live to
Gayer, brighter seasons !

FEARFUL and trembling, Sigrida blessed the covert of her chamber; she bosomed hope in the pity of the half penitent Ursula, and she rallied that kind of confidence within her, well suited to the colour of her destiny; she grounded her trust on “the rock of ages;” and the meek virtues, and the resolute perseverance of father Dominick, whispered, that even in this world, her cares and her wrongs were not unheeded, that philanthropy laboured for her deliverance, and that her incarcerated father, in the depth of his dungeon, might yet find a friend.

Alas! the friend of her youth, the friend of her heart, was far distant, unconscious of her sufferings, perhaps, a stranger to her fate: often did the image of Xavier float upon memory; often, in her dreams, did he stand forth her champion and her deliverer; like the

“False colours of the watery bow,”

dazzling and bright, then fading into nothingness! Often, too, did the mild voice, and the holy precepts of the curate of Saverdsio, beguile the loneliness of the hour; did his smile of benevolence, his look of zeal, his acts of christian charity, his ensample of patience, forbearance, and quiescence, season the murmur of complaint, and stifle the sigh of repining.

The last beam of the setting sun, trembling in momentary brightness, shed a thousand glories on the hoar-frost, pendent and hanging, like fantastic draperies, on the surrounding rocks and forests: it was the close of a resplendent day, and light and vapory clouds of

gold and purple, reflected the dying orb, long after it was lost to human vision. Insensible to the nipping air, Sigrida stood at the casement, watching the fast fading burnish, gilded, and vanishing, like the world's hopes! Ursula had promised to learn more of the Swedish prisoner confined in the dungeons of the keep, yet the hour of her usual attendance was passed, and Ursula was still absent: doubts, and cares, and terrors arose; could the stand of virtue be so feeble?—could she already repent her kindness? “Oh, no, no! I will strive to judge better of human nature,” she sighed: “sure, 'tis sorrow and persecution which makes me thus suspicious.”

“Another hour wore away, and darkness veiled the face of things, ere Ursula entered the chamber; and then she trod with a soundless step, and carefully reclosing the door, placed the lamp on the table.

“I have seen Stromfelt,” she exclaim-

ed, in a voice somewhat beyond a whisper, “and I have heard—” Sigrida spoke not, but she turned anxiously towards her. “I have heard but little of this Swedish prisoner,” pursued Ursula; “for it should seem, my lord commands no mention to be made upon the subject. Still was Sigrida silent—her spirit drooped—her eyes filled with tears. “Do not fear me, sweet lady; I am not to be frightened, or coaxed from my purpose. In our first walk upon the rampart, Stromfelt would needs have changed the theme: but ere we had taken the third turn, I learned that the prisoner in the keep had recovered his long journey; that he was well in health; that his fate—that—that—that his crime—that—that the sword of our late administrator was found hid beneath his cloak; the very sword which the prince wore in the battle of Bogesund: and that that sword, that—” She ceased, for the hysterical sob, the death-wan face of Sigrida, alarmed her for her safety. “You

are ill, lady. Alas the day! that fatal sword will murder you both—" and she would have flown for restoratives, had not the feeble hold of the struggling girl withheld her.

" Air—air," she gasped out, and soon did a flood of tears relieve her pent-up anguish.

" I am sure," resumed the pitying half weeping Ursula, " my heart aches for the wrongs and sorrows of our countrymen. If it was not for fear, I could almost say the reign of king Christiern was a bitter curse."

" Sure, is he 'a brand plucked out of the fire,' sobbed Sigrida, " for desolation and misery mark his movements: he delights in the tears of the widow, and he glories in the orphan's groans; he scatters ruin throughout the land; he——"

" Hush! hush, dear lady!" and Ursula glanced timidly around, as though eaves-droppers and listeners lurked in the winds of heaven: carefully she re-closed the

casement, and then, in whispering accents, urged consolation, and strove to reconcile to the decrees of fate.

“ Yes, yes, I know it all—I feel it all—” and Sigrida wrung her hands in despair—“ My father must die. The crime of a true Swede, is love for Sweden.”

“ I did not say so, lady. Father Dominick would urge submission and patience; father Dominick would say, unless heaven willed it, the powers of darkness could not prevail; that the weapons of ungodliness are ever blunted, when aimed against righteousness and true faith. It was the very doctrine he preached to me, when I was penitent, and grief-worn, and humble. Take comfort, dear lady; your sorrows are not the sorrows of sin; you mourn through the obduracy of others; you shed the tears of grief, not remorse; your heart is innocent, your conscience white as unsunned snow your—”

“ No more—no more, Ursula. I would hear further of my dear father. Stromfelt, what more said Stromfelt?”

"He said, lady—but you are so wretched already, I would comfort, not wound."

"I can hear all—I can bear all," quick rejoined Sigrida; "my mind is framed for trial and endurance, for conviction tells me, 'tis the lot of all who groan within the custody of Christiern."

"The great crime of the Swedish prisoner, then," resumed Ursula, "is having in possession that fatal sword; nay, boasting in spite of a host of foes, that he cherished it as a holy relic; that he loved Sweden with his whole soul; that he had fought the battles of Sweden, and that he would die true and faithful to her interests. This he said, and more than this he said; and for this he is cast into a dismal dungeon, with no better bed than straw; and no other food than black bread and cold water."

"My heroic, my noble father!" murmured Sigrida. "Holy saints! and must I glory in the very weakness my heart mourns?" For many moments, she stood tranced in thought, her arms folded, her

eyes fixed on vacancy; suddenly snatching the arm of Ursula, “Is this Strom-felt human?” she asked; “has he compassion?—has he feeling?”

“I hope so, lady; but his powers are limited, and he greatly fears the general; he——”

“What general?” interrupting her.

Ursula drew close beside her. “I can trust you—I will trust you,” she whispered. “Dear lady, you are too good to betray, to——” She ceased, for Sigrida, shrieking, buried her face in her hands. It was no conjured vision, no ideal fantasy: the gigantic form who had blasted her earthly happiness, the evil genius who had spirited her from home and from peace, the fell fiend, lording it over her suffering father, darkened the door-way: she tottered, she could hardly stand; and when he strode into the apartment, when Ursula slunk fearfully away, her very heart trembled within her.

“How may I interpret this agitation?”

he asked—"I come on the mission of peace, and yet I banish all the roses from that fair cheek."

"'Tis an unfitly season," faltered Sigrida, "and woman's nerves are not always strung for surprise."

"Mean you, that a herald should have trumpeted my approach?"

"Oh no! I mean, that 'tis almost time for weariness to rest, and thought and care has long kept me wakeful."

"Thought and hope," he eagerly exclaimed, "has alike banished slumber from my pillow."

"Hope," repeated Sigrida—"alas! hope is an inmate I scarce dare to harbour."

"Hope is an inmate I would purchase with worlds; it has supported me in absence; it now binds me here, spite of the calls of duty. Believe me, mine has been the errand of necessity, lovely Sigrida: but for the responsibility of command, lapped in Elysium, I would never wan-

der; within Love's bright circlet, I would concentrate my world, nor ask another heaven."

Sigrida trembled, but she recalled the heroism of her father, she recalled, the injunction of the monk, and she rallied courage and fortitude. "There is one proof," she said, raising her eyes to his face, "which might evince sincerity."

"Name it? tax me, Sigrida, and judge your influence by my zeal."

"The Swedish prisoner in the dungeon of the keep—I would petition—I would pray—"

"Hah!" interrupting her, "who has betrayed command?—who has dared, who—"

"Chance—chance alone has revealed your secret," rejoined the undaunted girl: "on me then let displeasure light; condemn me to the same dungeon, to the same chains. Faithful to the one firm bond of injustice and oppression—worthy their employer, worthy their employment—

your subtle emissaries, would fain persuade me 'twas an illusion of the senses, the mere cozenage of sorrow and of fancy: but as I live, from yon casement, I beheld my dear father marched a prisoner into the court-yard: and now, my lord, as you covet approval and favor, win them by deeds of common mercy."

Confounded, perplexed, torn with inward rage, yet unwilling to give it vent, he stood for many moments, ‘dark as the troubled face of the moon, when it foretells the storm.’ “Know you,” he at length demanded, “that your father’s crime comes not within the reach of individual interest?—that amenable to sovereign power, he stands arraigned of disloyalty and treason?”

“Treason,” echoed Sigrida, and all her native heroism, glowed in her cheeks, and kindled in her eyes: “if the love of country, if zeal for her honor, and sorrow in her disgrace, constitute treason, then is he guilty, then am I guilty: but

know, proud Dane, 'tis a guilt, in which we glory ; a guilt, which will soften all the pangs, your cruelty and malice can devise."

" My cruelty—my malice. Unkind one, is it just, to lord it in your power?—is it policy, to maintain so hard a rule? Think well of the safety of the Swedish prisoner:—he is in my keeping: is it wise, to urge his fate, by haughty pride, and chilling indignation?"

" Alas!" faltered the shuddering girl, " my pride and my courage vanish with the instant: humbled to my fortune, I have knelt, I still kneel for favour—I would supplicate your clemency—I would mould you into pity."

" And will you set me the example?" eagerly questioned the wily Dane; " will you smile upon a passion, lasting as it is fervent?—will you be grateful, if daring danger, I give you peace? - Mark me, Sigrida," and he took her passive hand, and gazed upon her varying features,

"the fate of your father rests on a higher power; his acquittal, or——"

"Yes, yes," interrupting him, "on heaven! his life, and your life, and my life, are alike limited."

"Enthusiast! I would confine myself to earth. Understand me better. The guilt, and the capture of your father, is reported to my liege the king; his late rebellious struggles, his ardour in the field, his zeal in the cause of the administrator, his exertions in the battle of Bogesund; above all, his obstinate adherence to a ruined cause, all thunder condemnation. The royal Christiern, justly severe, dooms the death of every traitor; and I am but surety for the appearance of my prisoner, when judgment shall be pronounced against him. Yet, Sigrida——" and something like softness relaxed the native sternness of his features—"to chase the tears from your eyes, to gild your youth with sunshine, to rally back the soother Hope, will I

forget my allegiance and my duty, the claims of my country, and the interests of my king. Your father groans out his life in the keep : the key of the keep is in my custody—in *your* custody—for through you, and *only you*, shall the gate be opened.” He paused for a moment ; but Sigrida still looked a breathing statue, her eyes fixed upon him, her cheeks, her lips bloodless ; he imprinted a kiss of passion upon her cold hand, but she moved not, struggled not ; no sob, no sigh escaped her ; changed, as though into stone, every faculty seemed dead, save hearing. “ You shall bless, and be blessed,” he pursued : “ armed with fate, empowered with command, you shall break, like a ray from heaven, upon the solitude of his dungeon ; you shall greet him with freedom ; you shall sooth him into security ; you shall pay back the life you owe him ; you shall hem him round with safety ; you shall indemnify him from hereafter harm ; you——”

“The purchase—the purchase,” gasped out Sigrida.

“Yourself—your love.” She closed her eyes in disgust and horror—she pressed her hand upon her throbbing temples—she felt a pulse beating in every vein: the mighty struggle was almost too much for nature, and yet she retained her senses. “Picture the paradise of your own creation,” resumed the tormentor. “Lovely Sigrida, alike in Denmark, or in Sweden, your father at large; no longer cowering in disguise; no longer shrinking from cognizance; blessing you as the prime source of his comforts; tracing to you the rich spring of his independence.” He ceased, but she still sat silent and motionless, her eyes tearless and burning, her cheeks, alternately flushed like crimson, or pale as death. “Have you no voice?” he asked. “Sigrida, picture the contrast, and pity your lost father; stretch forth a hand to save, or plunge him headlong into the grave of his wretch-

edness. Peep into his dungeon: behold him, as he is, stretched upon a cold flint; excluded light and air; his head pillow'd with a stone; his limbs manacled; his face bleached with care and suffering; debarred every comfort necessary to health, every solace which affliction most covets; groaning out the anguish of a broken spirit, and supplicating death as the sole pass to freedom. Let the daughter plead; let nature stay the arm of the executioner: shed not a father's blood; when you alone can avert the impending stroke."

"Live, live, my father!" pronounced Sigrida, her heart all feeling, her spirit all heroism, every sensation absorbed in the transport of restoring to the author of her being, liberty and comfort: but when the arm of the torturer, exulting and triumphant, encircled her waist; when in fondness he sought to draw her to him, she shrunk back, as though an asp had crossed her—she forgot all but the self-sacrifice—

she stood, dignified and awful, in the cold repellent guard of her virtue.

“An angel! a heroine!” he uttered, gazing on her with admiration and wonder.

A woman still, and Sigrida sunk weeping at his feet. But in vain did she strive to shake him from his purpose; in vain did she appeal to his humanity and his pride: the one was seared as with a red-hot iron; the other bent upon debasing the daughter of a Swedish patriot.

The most vile, the most degrading passion of nature, had expunged all of man within him: fired by the extreme beauty of his hapless captive, he thought it love—he called it love! Love, the pure ethereal essence of divinity—love, genuine and disinterested—love, which studies but the happiness, which seeks but the welfare of its object—love, prostituted term, too often covering nought but sensuality, too often rioting in the ruin of innocence and peace! Steadfast in a cruelty which

promised a rich harvest to his hopes, bent on a design leading to destruction, her tears, her sighs, and her supplications, were alike unheeded : he would stanch them in his bosom ; he would shield her from every ill ; he would watch her with miser's caution ; he would become her slave ; he would tend her with fidelity and homage ; he would ward off all care, all sorrow, but he would have more than gratitude for his services.

“ I love you, Sigrida,” he exclaimed, “ and love can be paid but with love.”

She met his eyes ; she read the malignity of his dark soul ; she deciphered a thousand varying passions struggling in his strongly marked countenance ; she thought of her father ; she tried to conquer her disgust and her hatred, but the shudder within chilled her heart. “ Leave me—leave me,” she implored—“ I would be alone—I would enjoy the prisoner’s privilege, solitude.”

He arose ; he stood frowning and

threatening beside her. “Rash, unthinking girl, you spur me into tyranny. I obey you—I go—I leave you to muse upon the straw bed, the hard fare, the living death of your father. In three days, your answer must be final; in three days, the prisoner receives at your hands, acquittal or death!”

Long after the door had closed upon the being, who, like Milton’s apostate angel,

“Heap’d on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others.”

Sigrida continued wrapped in her griefs: astounded, lost, too wretched far for consolation or for hope; now yielding to filial tenderness; now shuddering beneath the mortal ague of antipathy; alternately sacrificing all for the salvation of her father, or daring the malevolence of her fate. But vain would I portray the conflict of a heart tortured almost to breaking, of a brain racked almost to madness: it was not till after a long and speechless

struggle with the deathlike sensations which oppressed her, that she was conscious of the return of Ursula, and even then, her accents of comfort, her soothing whispers of hope, were as mockery and insult:—hope had taken wing, and despair, and health-consuming anguish, alone remained.

“Lady, dear lady,” implored the pitying Ursula, “heaven may yet have much good in store: look up; rally back your courage and your strength, for without courage and strength, nought can be essayed.” Sigrida raised her streaming eyes to the face of the speaker; she despaired a lurking meaning—she read more than the lips uttered. “I have again seen Stromfelt,” she pursued, “and to-morrow night, Stromfelt stands guard over the keep. Dear lady, weep no more: Stromfelt, though a Danish soldier, pities you; and I—I will aid you with life.”

“And will Stromfelt admit me to the presence of my father?” asked Sigrida—

“ will he grant me the melancholy privilege of weeping on his bosom, of craving his sympathy and counsel? Mother of God !” and she wrung her hands in despair, “ ‘tis my father, my dear persecuted father, who alone can brace me to the coming trial.”

“ Stromfelt promises to the utmost of his power,” whispered Ursula, “but Stromfelt’s power, like unto my own, is very limited: however, he may admit you into the passage: I know not whether he can unlock the door of the dungeon.” Sigrida only groaned. “ Dear lady, take heart: to-morrow, at noon, the Swedish prisoner is to appear before my lord. I know not whether it be for trial, but I heard my lord issue the order, now, as I crossed by the guard-room. He was talking to one of the officers, and he said, to-morrow, at noon, he would examine the prisoner himself.”

“ To-morrow at noon,” repeated Sigrida, and the throbings of her heart were almost audible.

“Now,” eagerly resumed Ursula, “as we have my lord’s permission to walk upon the rampart, if we too descend at noon, we may *accidentally* encounter the party as they go to the council-hall. My lord may rage and storm, but he can only accuse chance, for he places implicit trust in my fidelity. Alas! alas! lady,” and her features sunk to sadness, “if I would aid you, I must play a double part; but father Dominick, methinks, would absolve me.”

“Father Dominick would bless you—heaven will bless you—and I—I—” Sigrida burst into a passion of tears, and casting herself upon the neck of Ursula—“I will bless you to the latest hour of my existence.”

“And will you pray for my past sins?—will you pray for grace and firmness in my future trials? Oh, lady! if I had known you earlier; this goodness, so much above my deserts, this condescension, this graciousness—” and Ursula wept also.

Watchful and wakeful, the long hours of night passed, and ere “ morning trembled on the half enlightened ocean,” Sigrida arose to meet her coming trials. She had humbled herself at the footstool of the Eternal ; she had supplicated succour whence all succour flows, and she had obtained resignation and fortitude : prayer, like ambrosial dew distilled from heaven, softened the acute anguish of her feelings, and she could now, in the true fervor of a pious spirit, pronounce, “ Not my will, but Thine be done !” Yet as the fated hour advanced, as the sun climbed to his meridian altitude, nature and sensibility prevailed : a universal trembling seized her : and when close muffled in her cloak, she clung tightly to the firmer arm of Ursula : quick descending from the chamber, already had they half-way mounted the flight of steps leading to the rampart, when the tramp of feet spoke the approach of the party. Sigrida relinquished the arm of her supporter ; she turned, she

beheld an advancing group of Danish soldiers : they halted at the door of the council-hall : she bent eagerly forward ; she distinguished, in the midst, the worn, the bending shadow of her father, tottering beneath the weight of his chains, drooping beneath the pressure of infirmity ; she spoke not, shrieked not, but with a dart, like light, with a bound,

“ Swifter than arrow from the Tartar’s bow.”

she flew down the steps—she broke through the ranks—she threw herself, half fainting, upon his neck : her cloak and her bonnet had fallen off, and her beautiful hair, wild and dishevelled, shadowed her face and bosom ; her cheeks and her lips were white as the foam of the ocean ; she looked like Ossian’s ghost, descending upon the wings of the wind, dissolving amid clouds and mists ! Amazed, subdued, confounded, Ladislaus met the piteous glance of her eye, and his courage and his spirit vanished ; that glance was as the blast of fate, as the annihilation of

firmness; yet he held her spite of his shackles, he clung to her in the appalling moment of temporary death: she felt his arms relax—she felt his head fall heavy on her bosom—and then she shrieked, so wild and loud, that it rose above the general murmur, above the gathering confusion which prevailed.

“Tear them asunder,” vociferated her persecutor, rushing from the council-hall: but nature softened the hearts of the rough soldiery, and when Ladislaus revived, when he rallied back recollection and strength, he still felt the fervent clasp of his hapless child, he still felt her lips and her breath upon his cheek.

“Tear them asunder,” again thundered the tyrant; and Ladislaus, clasping her tighter to him, darted an eye of fire upon the speaker.

“Crumpein! monster! barbarian!” he ejaculated. “Oh God! preserve my child!”

It was none other than Otho Crumpein,

the general of the Danish army, the firebrand, whom Christiern, in his wrath, had let loose in Sweden, had chosen as the active emissary of his cruelties—Crumpein, who was never known to lean on the side of mercy—Crumpein, detested, execrated, loaded with the curses of a whole people!

“ Back—back to his dungeon,” exclaimed the general; and the next instant, spite of prayers, and struggles, and tears, spite of agony, spite of despair, they were torn from the arms of each other.

Dreadful, almost mortal, were the efforts of the tortured father: like the lioness, bereaved of her young, he wrestled in frenzy; he dashed back the guards; he grappled them with nerves of iron; he shook his chains; he strove until the blood gushed forth at every link which bound him, until nature, exhausted by the deadly stress, gave way, and left him groaning and powerless. Lifted from the earth, dragged unresistingly forward, too

weak even to call on heaven, the fainter and fainter shrieks of the wretched Sigrida pierced from his ear to his soul. Again for a moment he rallied; he beheld her struggling in the grasp of the wretches who held her; he cast one glance of agony upon her, and then he was hurried back into his dungeon.

CHAPTER XXII.

Life is an olio :

Now seasoned with joys ; now dashed with bitters ;
Now buoyant, as the light and flaky surf ;
Now dense, as the stagnant pool, which no soft
Breeze can ruffle.

AS Xavier closed the door of the church, “the blast of the morning came, and brightened the shaggy side of the hill;” the east was dappled with grey, and the vapors scudded before the growing effulgence. A smile, bright and beamy shone upon his countenance; he bosomed joy; he bore exultation in his heart; he had listened to the sanguine hopes, to the mighty projects of the royal Gustavus; he had talked of strife and of conquest, of reprisal and of fate, until “valour, like a pleasant flame, gleamed within his breast;” until his own brave spirit, forget-

ful of every other claim, panted for renown and for enterprise. It was the usurper of his country, it was the tyrant who held Sweden in chains—not the monarch, not the acknowledged friend of his father, who bayed him on to action; who, steeling him with hatred, spurred him to seek conquest even in the gripe of death: he thought not of Calo, not of the governor of Calo; he thought but of the massacre of Stockholm, but of the outrages, the indignities, heaped upon the representative of a kingly race; and again, in his inmost soul, did he repeat those vows of allegiance, his lips had already uttered.

For a moment he paused at the grave's-foot of Magdalene—he riveted his eyes upon the head-stone—he recalled the early sorrows of his parents.

“It was a Dane who blasted their paradise;” he murmured; and then chasing away the starting tear, he would have proceeded, but the sound of footsteps

arrested him. A man, habited in the coarse yarn of the peasantry, suddenly appeared around an acute angle of the church; he advanced cautiously, and gazing keenly and inquisitively in the face of Xavier.

"Marry! but your vigil is early, young gentleman," he exclaimed. "I should like to say my prayers at the same altar."

"The same altar is open to all," observed Xavier; "the same God vouchsafes a gracious ear to every suppliant."

"But I should like to enter the same church though," significantly resumed the peasant, "and to bend my knees before the same idol."

"And why should you wish to shadow a stranger?" asked Xavier.

"Because," whispered the man, and he drew close beside him, "if you were not firm, and steadfast, and trustworthy, you would not be the chosen deputy in a cause so sacred."

Xavier tried to look doubtful, spite of

the high throbings of his heart, which seemed to tell him his secret was guessed at ; he tried to throw surprise and enquiry into his countenance. “ I cannot resolve riddles,” he replied. “ In truth, my honest friend, I know no cause which needeth a deputy.”

“ Then why,” eagerly asked the peasant, “ do I behold youth, instead of grey hairs?—why health and strength, in the place of decrepitude and wrinkles?”

“ And why do I behold you here at an hour so unseemly?” questioned Xavier : “ why may not the same inclination have conducted us alike to the same spot?”

“ Doubtless, the same inclination *has*,” said the peasant, with marked emphasis. “ I am a labourer in the mines of Oernetz : but though the lord of Oernetz be my master, the principles of the lord of Oernetz are altogether foreign to my nature. Yours is a blessed mission, and I honor you for your caution : yet say to your charge—if you own a charge be-

yond the venerable curate—that Ludolph, the brother of the deceased Segiswold, would fain lay at his feet, his faith and his life.”

“ Ludolph !” repeated Xávier, but checking himself, “ Where now, my honest friend, do you sojourn ? for if from Oernetz, far distant are you from home.”

“ My home,” said Ludolph, “ is ever where my duty calls me. I was in the mine, when fair words, and baited promises, lured the pretended Segiswold from safety. I saw him depart, and I grieved when I returned alone to my dwelling—I could not settle—I could not feel composure. The regrets of my wife, and the lamentations of my children, were altogether ominous. I liked not Peter-son; yet how suspect a lord, the plotter of ruin and treason. I always thought Segiswold other than what he seemed : but I could not guess, I could not— Saints and martyrs ! how could I dream, the general of the Swedish horse, would

e'er find sanctuary in my poor cabin! But for the blessed lady of Oernetz, but for Jacob Jacobson, but for——”

Xavier grasped his arm. “Have a care,” he implored; “our words may be heard; our actions may be marked.”

“Heaven—heaven alone notes them,” eagerly pursued Ludolph. “The dead cannot hear; and for the living, all, and every Swede, must glory in the deliverer of Sweden!”

“You are a brave, a noble fellow!” exclaimed Xavier; you are——”

“I am *a man*,” feelingly interrupted Ludolph: “all who are born noble, merit not the claim. But your royal charge—may I not bear to his feet, the fealty of hundreds? All who have laboured with him in the mines, all who have heard his inspiring words, have marked his heroic spirit—all pine to do him homage: aye, and the fire has spread; it has reached Fahlun, and Easter Silberg, and Nefverberg, and every mine in Dalecarlia; it

rages, it invigorates, it gives zest to courage, and spur to emulation. We are a brave, and a hardy race, jealous of our liberties, and tenacious of our rights ; we bear oppression in sullen silence; we hail the promise of deliverance with rapturous joy."

" May the hour of that deliverance soon dawn!" exclaimed Xavier—" may every hand, and every heart, conjoin in the mighty struggle! But let us to the curacy. I would fain report all of this morning's meeting."

" Why not to the church?" asked Ludolph. Xavier spoke not, but he led forward, and leaving Ludolph in the passage, hastened to the presence of his expecting uncle.

Fevered and restless, the feeble hand of de Stiernhelm was extended at his approach; he had numbered the hours of his absence, and with an anxiety, bordering on impatience, had marked the gradual advance of " the pale light of

the morning," his own bodily ailings, for the first time, imparting care, for he bosomed the wish, and he felt the necessity, for active service: he saw himself, even on the grave's slippery brink, taxed with a ponderous charge, with a weighty responsibility; entrusted with the safety, and the keeping of a prince, who seemed, in the hands of heaven, the destined redeemer of his country's forfeit honour; who borne through perils and dangers, combating accumulating ills, yet lived with the deliverance of Sweden, mingling and woven in his being; who thinking no sacrifice too great for the salvation of his country, estimated existence but as the entrusted talent for universal benefit!

" My son, how fares our royal charge?" and de Stiernhelm with aching growing solicitude, listened to Xavier's recognition of the prince, and Ludolph's strange and persevering importunity.

" If the face, the aspect is to be relied

on, if human nature may be trusted, that man is no other than he seems."

The curate half raised himself in his bed. "We live in times of peril," he murmured, "when the eye sees not its danger, when the heart knows not its friend: we must be wary; we must move like the blind mole; for the vulture may coo as the dove, the wolf bleat as the lamb, to forward the plottings of treachery."

"Alas! alas! my uncle, and would you impugn all human kind?—would you extend distrust and doubt to every breathing atom?"

"I would hem in our illustrious charge," solemnly pronounced de Stiernhelm—"I would secure him beyond the reach and malice of his enemies—I would yet gild the setting sun of my own life, with the rich burnish of his glory." Xavier grasped the hand of his uncle; he bent over the bed; he wept in the bitterness of his feelings; he saw in the waning strength, he read in the wan and wasted image before

him, the true, the heart-rending conviction, that that sun was indeed fast hastening to its transit. "This coming night," pursued de Stiernhelm, apparently regardless of his emotion, "you must breathe the name of Ludolph into the ear of the prince: his knowledge of Ludolph, and his trust in Ludolph, must alone decide all future disclosure."

"And must I dismiss this Ludolph?" asked Xavier; or rather, may I not invite him to a home and a shelter?"

The curate mused in deep thought. "My feelings and my prudence accord not," he at length replied; "whilst the one pleads for the necessitous, the other shrinks at the possibility of a spy."

"At Rustgoden," remarked Xavier, "we bosomed that possibility, when the royal Gustavus himself craved shelter in the snow-storm. Ah! what will Ladislaus think, when he hears the being he harboured! My uncle—my dear uncle, if we drive a patriot from us; if——"

"Bid him return to-morrow," interrupted de Stiernhelm, "and give him, in the meantime, that which shall ensure a shelter."

Xavier sighed ; he moved reluctantly to the door ; he stood with his hand placed upon the lock. "I would bet my very existence upon his faith," he at length hesitatingly pronounced. "How, my dear uncle, should he know ought of Peterson, of my aunt, of Jacobson?"

"It is the indiscretion of Jacobson I most fear," said the curate. "The world, Xavier wears a glossy aspect ; and that pit is not the least deadly, whose surface is most muffled in flowers. Go ; dismiss this Ludolph : to-morrow we may know him better."

"To-morrow," repeated Xavier, still lingering. "My uncle," and he crimsoned as he spoke, "I would fain, ere to-morrow visit Rustgoden : 'tis long since we have heard of our friends ; and Ladi-slaus would aid us in our present emer-

gency." The curate turned aside his face; he strove to hide the deep care and sorrow gathering on his features, yet the anguished sigh which swelled his bosom, escaped not the ear of watchfulness. "Alas! what mean you?" interrogated Xavier, and anxious and agitated, he returned to the side of the bed.

"I mean," faltered de Stiernhelm, "that disappointment and sorrow is the tax entailed upon human transgression; that in this world—" He paused, at the groan, and the palsied shudder of his nephew.

"Go on—go on," implored Xavier: "what may this fearful prelude threaten?"

"It threatens mystery, my dear boy; it threatens desolation to our hopes, and torture to our friendship. I myself have journeyed to Rustgoden: the dwelling stands, but the ruin is complete. Ladislaus and Sigrida——"

"Again he paused, for the tale of devoted passion was revealed in the almost death-struggle of Xavier—he tottered—

he fell upon the bed's-foot of his uncle—he lay for many moments without life or consciousness: *Sigrida* was the first word he uttered; and then, with a sudden effort, as though the pang and the recollection revived together—"Tell me—tell me the worst?" he urged: "all can I endure save suspense."

"You love *Sigrida*," murmured the nearly weeping de Stiernhelm.

"Love her—love her," wildly repeated Xavier. "Oh, God! oh, my uncle! *Sigrida* is dearer to me than the breath of life! *Sigrida* is my world! without her, youth is barren, and hope rayless! Yes, yes, I do love her—I have long loved her: my father sanctifies that love—I come, to woo her, to win her, and now—now—" He ceased—he wrung his hands in despair.

"The pangs of the heart are bitter," feelingly pronounced de Stiernhelm: "in them we trace the shoals and the quick-sands waylaying maturity: without pas-

sion, we are cold and dead; with passion, we are the slaves of a thousand evils."

Xavier could only groan: wounded in the tenderest point, bereaved in the moment of fancied security, he had no ear for reasoning, no patience for trite philosophy: he had heard of ills, and disappointments, and sorrows, but he had never felt the reality until now; he had wept the blight of others happiness, without considering, how slight, how very slight, is the tenure of all earthly joy!

"My son," resumed the curate, "the tenets of our faith prescribe a limit to grief. I grant the blow is heavy, but not altogether hopeless. Though in captivity, our friends are not quite lost; exertion may aid, despair can only incapacitate."

Xavier started into being; a new hope felt to kindle within him. "True, true," he exclaimed; "we may yet seek, we may yet rescue our friends: yield me but the clue, and before heaven, I swear, to

snatch them even from the gripe of Christiern. My father will lend me his interest and his power; and love, and persevering friendship, will combat a whole host of foes. Tell me then, my dear uncle, all you saw, all you heard, in your visit to Rustgoden?"

"First dismiss this peasant," said de Stiernhelm; "bid him return on the morrow, and then will we speak further of ourselves."

Xavier fled with Sigrida in his heart, and not even the wistful glance of Ludolph, could long detain him from the conference. "To-morrow," he replied, to all the eager importunities of the peasant; visit us, to-morrow, my friend;" and forcing an eight-mark piece of silver into his hand, he quick returned to the chamber above.

All ears, all feeling, all tremulous sensibility, he listened to the mournful detail: he heard that the curate, alarmed at the long silence of Ladislaus, with diffi-

culty and fatigue, had himself repaired to Rustgoden; that he had found the cottage deserted and solitary—Ladislaus and Sigrida borne away to captivity—Witskey, a wanderer in search of his unfortunate master—and Hetha, the victim of grief and terror, resting beneath the sward.

“Alas!” and the curate struggled against his blinding tears, “it was an o’erwhelming pilgrimage. All that I could gather from the astounded neighbours, was, that the crime of Ladislaus was his love for Sweden; that accused of disloyalty to the new tyrant, of faith and attachment to the late administrator, in midnight darkness, himself and his angel child, had alike been dragg'd from their home and their comforts. Hetha attested it in the awful moment of death, but Hetha could yield no clue to the further solution of the mystery.”

“Avenging God!” ejaculated Xavier, “where were Thy thunders?” De Stiernehelm glanced reproof, but he spoke not.

"May curses—may blights and mildews—
may—"

"Spare your curses, my poor boy," interrupting him. "We are all in the hands of that Almighty Being, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Weak and fallible, ourselves, how dare we then deprecate divine wrath on the heads of our fellow transgressors?"

"Sigrida—the innocent, the unoffending Sigrida!" sobbed Xavier—"oh, my friend, it is there that my heart bleeds!"

"Yet must we not fall into sin because we are sinned against," mildly resumed the curate: "nature has given us feeling: 'tis for religion to temper that feeling with resignation; it is for reflection to impress, that the prime duty of a christian is forgiveness, be the trespass ever so mighty, be the evil ever so deadly:—we pray for pardon, but as we yield pardon."

Xavier bowed his head; he venerated the precepts of his uncle, yet could he

not revoke the curse : every passion was outraged, every feeling in arms ;

“ The tempest in *his* mind,
Did from *his* senses take all feeling else,
Save what beat there ;”

his love, his trust, his very soul was stung ; his hopes desolated, and every gilded promise of his future life, blighted, destroyed, crumbling like a shapeless ruin, nor leaving one single vestige to lure back affrighted peace.

“ Time,” observed de Stiernhelm, attentively surveying him, “ prayer, and the known goodness of your own heart, be my reliance ! And now, my son, I implore you, retire to your chamber : a tortured mind, and the fatigues of a long journey, need rest.”

But as well might he have bid the winds be hushed, as well might he have stayed the turbulence of the mighty ocean—Xavier did retire to his chamber, but Xavier, for whole hours, was the victim of almost maddening agitation : swayed by con-

tending passions; alternately yielding to the dominion of jealousy, revenge, and hate; magnifying every ill which could threaten defenceless beauty, and panting, thirsting, for the heart's blood of his mysterious rival: for to the stranger, who had so lucklessly crossed the path of Sigrida, did he trace the misfortunes and the disappearance of **Ladislaus**. A thousand schemes, a thousand vague and wild projects crowded upon each other: now he would adventure alone; he would visit, he would penetrate into every corner of the **Danish** territory; he would devote life, and strength, and youth, to the cause of friendship: then again, the wrongs of **Sweden**, the injuries and the claims of **Gustavus**, would mingle with his own individual grievances, and quicken every spring of patriotism: he would unsheathe the sword; he would aid in the death-daring struggle; he would wed his powers to the fortunes of his prince; he would rescue **Sweden**—he would rescue Si-

grida—or he would perish in the glorious effort.

Xavier was always a hero, and now, the influence of woman sharpened the spur of his heroism. “Sigrida, and my country!” he exclaimed, and he looked, and he felt immortal; courage was as a shield of steel, and duty a breastplate of adamant.

With a mind more calm, and an aspect less perturbed, after an absence of many hours, he re-sought the presence of his uncle: he found him arisen, habited in his ordinary vesture, and intent upon several documents which lay spread on a table before him. A smile, and an extended hand, greeted his approach.

“We live in an age when time must not be given to self,” said the curate, in reply to the enquiries of his nephew. “I trust, in God, this very night, supported by your strong arm, I shall be empowered to track the arduous path of my duty.” Xavier look anxiously, inquisitively to-

wards him. “Here is much and glorious matter!” pursued de Stiernhelm, laying his spread hand upon the papers. “My friends, and co-partners in toil, have laboured with diligence and success: throughout the whole province, the sway of Denmark is altogether hated, and the blessed moment, for our sun to emerge from his cloud of obscurity, advances!”

“Gustavus!” exclaimed Xavier, springing to his side.

“The hope of Sweden!” piously pronounced the curate—“under heaven, the champion, the deliverer of our groaning country! On him will every eye be turned—through him, shall we hail those mighty throes, which must give birth to liberty, or give us all a grave.”

“My uncle—my blessed uncle!” and Xavier’s eyes flashed the scathing fire of vengeance—“dawns the season for active strife?—does the times promise so brightly?—does the clatter of his chains, arouse the sluggard, from his deep, deep sleep?”

"It does—it has!" replied the curate. "Sweden struggles beneath her load of degradation; and man, asserting his native right, prepares to cast off his bonds. To-night, will we repair to the church, will we seek the prince; to-night——"

"We," interrupted Xavier—"oh, no, no! not we: my friend, think of the risk, and have compassion on your infirmities."

"Heaven, in this most arduous period of my calling, mercifully vouchsafes me an interval of ease," rejoined de Stiernhelm; "and shall I hesitate to dedicate that ease to the service of my country? No, my son, this night, spite of the winter's blast, will I visit the altar of my duty—will I supplicate grace and favor upon all our undertakings!"

"With an impatience, almost inexplicable to himself, Xavier watched for the hour of darkness; watched the gathering gloom of the sky, as though the approaching interview with Gustavus, was but a prelude to the rescue of her he

loved: he felt inaction as a reproach to his heart, and eagerly did he pine, to launch upon the great enterprise, which would graft in one, the deliverance of Sigrida and of Sweden.

The midnight hour chimed, and the aged patriot continued firm to his purpose: in vain Xavier strove to moderate his heroism; the call of duty was impetuous, and all the powers of reasoning, all the force of argument, failed.

"When I look back on the past years of my existence," said the holy man, "it seems as a dream; the sorrows, and the trials, which have fallen to my lot, as mere variations in the colouring: and shall I withhold, the hair-spun thread, the brief moment, which remains to me, from a cause so sacred? Ask it not, my son:—however, my vocation and my infirmities forbid my dying in the field, I fear not death in the service of my country!"

Not a star dappled the inky heavens, as silently they crossed the church-yard;

the wind blew “melancholy music;” and not even at the grave of Magdalene, did they pause in sorrow or in contemplation: anchored on a cause beggaring the pressure of local feeling, they entered the church; and not until a cold yet cordial hand was extended alike to each, not until the accents of grateful welcome broke upon the deep stillness of the tomb, did they awaken from the seeming trance of their own reflections.

The rays of the lanthorn fell upon the towering form of Gustavus; his countenance was pale, but firmness and intrepidity, dwelt, as ever, on his brow. Pleasure thrilled through his brave breast at the mention of Ludolph.

“My firm friend! my kind host! my generous benefactor!” he exclaimed. “Yes, Ludolph said true; in a dungeon, or upon a throne, will my heart ever hail him!” But soon did the important communication of de Stiernhelm supersede even the zeal of the miner: the whole province of

Dalecarlia was ripe for revolt ; the whole peasantry, turbulent and brave, were craving for a leader, and calling on the name of the supposed incarcerated Gustavus. Rapidly had the propagated report, of the levy of fresh taxes and impositions, circulated ; the threatened approach of new forces from Denmark rallied every particle of hate, and all the native courage of the Swedish character, rose, as does the lion in the toil—Liberty became the consecrated fane of their worship, and each, and every warlike spirit, kindled into flame !

“ It is for you then, my lord ! ” exclaimed the curate, “ to come forth from your hidingplace—to throw off all disguise—to show yourself in their assemblies—to claim their fealty and their homage.”

The first impulse of Gustavus was to bend his knee in fervent adoration. “ To Thee—to Thee, O God ! be praise ! ” he ejaculated, and then rising, and turning, with a beamy smile to de Stiernhelm—

"Tell me, my venerable friend," he pursued, "the day, the hour, when braced in confidence and hope, I may appeal to the hearts of my brave countrymen?"

The curate, for many moments, stood wrapped in profound thought; suddenly starting: "The anniversary of our blessed Lord is the season for thanksgiving and praise," he replied; "for it yielded joy and hope to man. Throughout the whole of the Christmas holidays, Mora is as the rallying point of all the populous diocese: the villages pour forth their strength; the peasants flock in hundreds: left to their own feelings, exhilarated by the full view of their own power, and their own numbers; the youthful swayed by the influence of the aged; the aged, grounding faith and reliance on the bold and nervous prowess of their gallant sons: it is then—it is there—at *the Festival of Mora*, that the legitimate descendant of our ancient kings, must seek acceptance and favor."

“ Be it then—be it there,” energetically pronounced Gustavus : “ at *the Festival of Mora*, at the annual assemblage of the flower and the strength of Dalecarlia, be the first, the earliest stress for liberty, effected ! Yes—” and heroism shone as a halo around his brow—“ I will stand amidst the mighty concourse—I will appeal to the heart of every father, of every son—I will set forth, the dearth of our hopes, the barrenness of our prospects, the annihilation of our rights: Yet while I strive to rally back the ancient spirit of our country—while unfurling the golden crowns, I would force the passant lions to quail before our hereditary standard—fain would I convince my followers and my friends, that the humility of the miner Segiswold, cannot be forgotten, in the brighter fortunes of the son of the royal Erickson.”

“ All eyes will be turned upon you—all hopes will be riveted upon you !” exclaimed the curate. “ The morbid clouds

which have so long eclipsed the sun of our splendor, will pass away ; despondence changed for the shouts of exultation ; the groans of oppression, the murmurs of dissatisfaction, for confidence and hope : Sweden will revive to energy and to independence ; her privileges and her freedom, her glory and her honor, will re-dawn !”

Xavier’s sword was in his hand—Xavier’s heart was on his lips. “ May we live to hail the issue ! ” he fervently pronounced—“ may we give liberty to posterity ! —may we rend away the chains of despotism, or may we die in the forthcoming struggle ! ”

The prince too unsheathed the weapon with which Ingleburge had armed him ; he looked mighty in daring ; like Ossian’s Cathmor, “ the darts of death had been hail to him ; they had often rattled along his shield — ” and as he kissed the blade, “ Until Sweden be freed from her tyrants,” he ejaculated, “ mayest thou know

no sheath save the bosom of an enemy ! in the cause of our country, for the prosperity of our country, mayest thy burnish, in Denmark's vital blood be dimmed !"

Xavier caught the vivid fire, inhaled the bright enthusiasm, as his lips pronounced the like vow—as he sealed it with the like seal : he thought not of his own splendid inheritance ; he thought but of the wrongs of Sweden, but of the rescue of Sigrida, and his looks, and his inmost soul, joyed in the anticipated conflict. Not so de Stiernhelm : his calling of peace, his study of christian charity, sickened at the threatened spoliation of human blood—Religion pined for the dove and the olive-branch, even when conviction told him, that the strides of despotism must be stayed. It was zeal for his country, it was love for his fellow men, which bound him the active agent in the ripening project : he knew nought of political intrigue, nought of human policy, nought of that subtle spirit, which influ-

enced solely by self-interest, seeking to aggrandize and govern, reconciles and embroils, according to circumstances; his was the meek and goodly policy, which would labour out blessings and prosperity; which, founded upon equity and universal justice, would calculate, meditate, weigh the present, reflect upon the past, and arm against the future; a policy, more of heaven than earth, reconciling man to his fellow, and fitting him for hereafter blessedness.

“ I would fain,” he said, “ stay the waste of human lives, but mercy sides not with indecision. I see—I feel, the strife must be heavy, ere the harvest be gleaned; the palm of our liberty must be sprinkled with blood, ere it be wrested from the fangs of Christiern: posterity will bless our efforts; hereafter ages will joy in our toils; and here, even here, the consciousness of redeeming a whole nation from slavery and ruin, will pluck away every thorn from our pillow of death.

“ Grant, Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth!” and bending his bare head in lowly reverence, his grey hair, like flakes of snow, hung o'er his furrowed brow—
“ that aided by Thy favor, strengthened by Thy grace, armed in the justice of our cause, and invulnerable through the purity of our intentions, our struggles, for the honor, the tranquillity, and the happiness of Sweden, be not made in vain! In times of peril, enrich us with foresight and prudence; in adversity give us patience; in prosperity, moderation;—give us success, give us liberty, and above all, give us hearts to laud and serve Thee!”

True as the return of morning, in all the energy of honest feeling, in all the warmth of disinterested regard, Ludolph revisited the curacy, panting, pining, to pour forth his fealty, at the feet of the royal hero, who had so late shared his home and his labours.

The suspicions of the miner had been excited, even at the moment, when Peter-

son lured his intended victim from his sanctuary ; he read the smile of doubtful meaning, and his fears rose in arms ; he saw Gustavus depart for Oernetz, and his mind became the prey of uneasiness. Influenced by that foresight, that presentiment, so often seen, yet so inexplicable to our finite reason, at day's earliest dawn, his restless inquietude roused him from his slumbers ; and insensible to cold, he paced the broad borders of the frozen lake, and hovered around the walls of Oernetz : he saw Peterson return, attended by a file of Danish soldiers ; he saw them carefully surround the dwelling ; and he heard the treacherous Dalecarlian promise to surrender his prize.

A war of passions, almost too mighty for endurance, tortured the soul of the brave and honest miner : he saw Peterson and the Danish officer enter by a back door ; his heart died within him ; yet the next moment, it throbbed with gratitude and transport, for he heard, midst the

dismay and confusion which ensued, that the prince had escaped, that the intended victim had fled the snare. How did he exult in the certainty!—how fervently did he adore that gracious Providence, who had so miraculously warded off the shaft of death! He heard the denouncements of wrath, the curses of malevolence, the murmurs of disappointment; and he hastened back to the scene of his labours, bosoming the possibility, that the royal fugitive might have thrown himself upon the known fealty of the miners. In his path, he encountered Jacobson returning from Saverdsio; he knew him to be a servant at Oernetz, high in the favor of his mistress, zealous, faithful, and trust-worthy: and when he accosted him; when he questioned of his errand, when he spoke of all which had transpired, of the treachery of Peterson, and the escape of the pretended Segiswold, the evasive manner, and equivocation of Jacobson, fanned doubt into conviction. Lu-

dolph pressed enquiry ; nor did they separate, until he was fully satisfied, that the prince owed his safety, and his present asylum, to the noble interference, and heroic loyalty of the wife of Peterson.

He returned then to the mines, but he returned not as heretofore, to ply the mattoc ; he returned to make converts, to inspire zeal, to blow the flame of disaffection, and rally his compeers to the one glorious standard of liberty. Already, had the animated harangues, the pathetic appeals of the disguised patriot, sunk deep into the hearts of his fellow miners ; —he had laid the train, and now it needed but the match to quicken it into being. Again did Ludolph seek out Jacobson : enriched with the sworn fealty of hundreds, he pined to behold his late humble guest, to lay at his feet the trophies of his perseverance and fidelity. But though at length he laboured out the knowledge of his removal to Saverdsio, he found it less easy to dive into the mystery of his retreat :

again and again did he wander around the curacy, did he peer into the very windows; his eye caught not the image he sought: more than once, he marked the suffering aged de Stiernhelm, dragging his aching limbs to the church; but his calling coloured the suspicion of self-awarded penance: and not until the mission was consigned to younger hands, until at midnight, watching the lighter form and swifter movements of Xavier, he lost him at the side-door of the sacred edifice, did fancy picture the possibility of that edifice proving a refuge to the body as well as to the soul.

Tarrying amid the earthy rest of the departed, musing on the mouldering clay, and screening himself, beneath the consecrated walls, from the cold and biting blast, he waited the re-appearance of Xavier, thinking to seize at once the thread of his secret, and urge him to acknowledgment: but too wary, too politic for the feint, Ludolph, as we have already

seen, quitted Saverdsio, unsatisfied : and when, as by appointment, he, the next morning, stood in the presence of the venerable de Stiernhelm, his heart hanging on his lips, his truth and his love mantling in his eyes, he calmly listened to the mild accents of the divine, joyed in the announced health and safety of their mutual charge, and unconditionally submitted to that policy, which, fearful of discovery and danger, still withheld him from pouring forth his loyalty at the feet of the royal Gustavus.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It is not because affliction gathers,
And sorrow multiplies—because time holds
Forth no promise, nor fate one cheering ray,
That fortitude should droop, and patience die.
The sunbeam rides on the tempest's inky
Bosom! God's covenant to man, succeeds
The whelming shower!

ALTHOUGH shut out by distance, although hemmed in by tyranny, the desperate resistance, the blood-starting struggles of the frenzied Ladislaus, long lived in the fancy, in the eyes, in the ears of Sigrida. Distinctly had she heard the name of Crumpein; and at the name of Crumpein, the oppressor, the scourge of her native land, indignation arose; hope withered in her bosom; she stretched her arms towards the keep, her eyes

wildly fixed, her respiration laboured, suspended, as it were, betwixt the agonies of death and eternity, her spirit hovering on her lips, and every limb palsied: and when the despairing groans of her father ceased—when she beheld him dragged down the dark arch-way of his prison—when she lost sight of his care-worn shadow—she turned, she fell prostrate at the feet of her persecutor; she grasped his robe; she clung to him with the frenzy of desperation.

“ My father—mercy, mercy, for my father !” she shrieked out, and then she sunk, as wan, and as resistless, as though heaven had indeed claimed her for its own.

Crumpein snatched the drooping lily from the earth; he beckoned Ursula; and impatient at the rising murmur of compassion, bore her swiftly back into her chamber. Tortured with jealous pangs, the storm of his rage broke in thunder: he execrated the whole world;

every eye which had profaned her beauty; nay, his own mistaken clemency, in according the privilege of her visiting the rampart; and long was it, ere the wily policy of Ursula, could reconcile him, to what she termed, the mere intervention of chance. His muttered threatenings were deadly; his curses deep and blasphemous: he would make all Sweden a wilderness; he would blow up her cities, and turn her very garners into barrenness; he would scatter ruin and fire; he would perpetuate his sway in the total annihilation of prosperity.

Sigrida heard, but she heeded not the rancour of his ire; she thought but of her father, but of the mortal anguish, the consuming misery into which he was now plunged; terror for his life subdued every other sensation; all fear for self, all personal consideration, vanished with returning power; she felt braced to exertion and to heroism. She had heard of the inflexibility of the tyrant who now held

her in bondage : even at Rustgoden, the rancour of his fiend-like turpitude, had chased the bloom of her cheek, and dimmed the lustre of her eye : she had listened to the swollen catalogue of oppression and violence coupled with the name of Crumpein, until her gentle nature had sickened, and her blood iced at the bold and daring flight of arbitrary power ; yet hope, the vital spring of bliss, again rallying, whispered that the human heart cannot be totally despoiled of its humanity ; that however the tares may choke up the virtues, some feeble germ, some scattered remnant must remain ; and that possibility, quickened by her own sanguine feelings, bent her once more to his feet. Again her hands were uplifted, and again her lips pronounced a prayer for mercy.

Crumpein hesitated for a moment, and a vivid crimson flushed his stern countenance, as he met her soft, her supplicating, her melting eyes ; but rallying back all his native fierceness, and depending more

upon terror and the impulsive workings of despair, than upon any possible beam of favor—"Your father dies," he exclaimed—"your father's forfeit life awaits but your decision: in two days from this, Sigrida, and at your hands he claims his fiat."

But alas! ere the lapse of two days, Sigrida was again scorched with fever and delirium; again the sport of wild and incoherent wanderings; incessantly apostrophizing her father, now, as an angel, radiant and happy; and now, as when last she had beheld him, in suffering, in chains, and in torture. Sometimes, Xavier, and the rich hopes of happier hours flitted upon fancy; but like the Iris-bow in the heavens, they were too bright to last; and then would quick follow, the dismal train, of judgment, of execution, and of death; scenes of blood and slaughter, and struggles of mental agony, destructive, and threatening to existence.

Crumpien, trembling lest his victim

should escape to her native sky, and leave him nought save regret and self-reproach, yielded implicitly to the management and directions of Ursula. At her bidding he banished himself the chamber, and submitted to all the cold restraints which policy imposed ; he listened to the knolled-out reports of danger, and cursed the precipitance which had terrified almost unto death : and when the struggles of youth and strength conquered the fell powers of disease, when Sigrida revived to consciousness, she beheld nought to plunge her back into the wild horrors of frenzy : gentleness and conciliation met her in the form of Ursula ; and though with memory came sorrow, the immediate incitement to despair was spared.

A whole fortnight had passed in this bitter conflict of nature—Ladislaus was still in his dungeon, and Crumpien was compelled to absent himself from the fortress : he had stretched the rein of

power to its utmost limit; and now, goaded on by misery, the murmur of dissatisfaction gathered and threatened: his presence was needed in the provinces, and he fled, to scatter pestilence abroad, to crush the bruised reed, and trample on the already bleeding; to thunder out the anathemas of vengeance, and to lay waste, with fire and with sword.

A faint smile played, like an April sunbeam, o'er the pale features of Sigrida, when she heard of the departure of the general; and her mind, gradually strengthening into firmness, turned anxiously and eagerly upon Strom-felt. Ursula was her abettor and her comforter; and to behold her father, and to consult with her father, ere the returning hour of trial, was now her most urgent desire. She had in part argued herself into the appalling sacrifice of a union with the being she loathed; and she fancied, that contemplating the woes and misery, stealing into the dungeon, and

viewing the hard bed, and harder fare of the wretched captive, would brace her resolution, and subdue every vestige of lingering reluctance.

“ It is my duty,” she would murmur, striving to chase the beguiling image of her youth’s love; and then she would shudder, as the stern and ungracious Dane, superseded the virtues and excellencies of Xavier. But for the salvation of her father, she would have braved every ill, she would have endured every persecution, ere she would have bartered the peace of her life: now, to snatch that father from the grave, to gild his latter years with serenity, could the immolation of her own individual happiness excite hesitation? “ Oh no!” she would exclaim, in the enthusiasm of the moment—“ heaven but gift me with fortitude, and I will labour to martyr the perversity of my own heart—heaven but grant me grace, and my daily, and my hourly toil, shall be to perfect the sacrifice!”

Gradually divorced by sorrow and adverse fortune from the painted lures and gilded promises of this world, she now strove to fix her thoughts on eternity, to regulate her actions and her feelings, by the one pure standard of faith and of submission; to endure here below without repining, in the meek but fervent anticipation, that the fullness of hereafter recompense would be complete: and as her reliance strengthened, as her heavenward trust augmented, as her pure spirit kenned beyond the sky, the pungent anguish, the deadly struggles of despair, ceased; for

“ Man’s heart th’ Almighty to the future sets,
By secret and inviolable springs ;
And makes his hope his sublunary joy.”

Another day declined, and Sigrida was still barred all access to her father’s dungeon: Ursula had urged Stromfelt, and Stromfelt had promised succour and compliance, yet still did expectation beguile,

and delay grow out of seeming casualty : now it was fear ; now, policy ; alternately, the dread of punishment, or the necessary sacrifice for security.

“ I care not,” said Ursula, gazing on her wan cheeks and tear-bedewed eyes—“ I will once more seek Stromfelt, and urge him, spite of his cautions and his follies. Dear lady, have you strength and courage to visit the keep to-night ?”

Sigrida raised her head from the hand which pillowed it. “ Yes, yes, Ursula, to face death in the cause of my dear father. Say to Stromfelt, “ hope deferred maketh the heart sick ; and in truth,” and she tried to smile, “ I am very very sick of delays and disappointments.”

“ I will tell him,” resumed Ursula, reading the struggles of her wounded spirit, “ that promises are empty, and that the soul, plumed for heaven, may yet take wing, ere, by one act of mercy, he atone for all his trespasses. Dear lady, muster your resolution and your fortitude ;

perchance it may be to-night, and the keep is but a sorry place."

" Yet is it the abiding-place of my father—" and she breathed a shuddering sigh.

" True lady: but by the holy-rood," and Ursula glanced cautiously around, " I would not exchange the dungeon of the prisoner, for the down couch and conscience of his persecutor!" "Tis strange, that vice should triumph over virtue: but the day of reckoning must arrive: doubtless, 'tis heaven's will, that fortitude should be exercised, and faith tried: but though we read it in the martyrdom of all our saints, fain would we cast the burden from our own backs:—alack! we would rather hear of stripes and of stones, than feel them. But I stand prating here, regardless of my mission. Lady, I pray you, muster all your courage. This very night, perhaps;" and then she quitted the chamber."

" I trust so—I hope so!" fervently pronounced Sigrida, listening to her retreat-

ing steps; and then she turned her eyes towards the casement, and beheld the fast gathering vapours thickening into gloom. “Yes, this very night,” she pursued, “may heaven grant me favor in the heart of Stromfelt! It is at thy lips, my father, I would seek consolation and support. This very night—” She paused—she listened—she sprung from her seat. Was it the terror-struck accents, the smothered shriek of Ursula which reached her ear! “Virgin mother!” she asperated, “what new trial, what new affliction threatens?” and then she stood, with her eyes riveted on the door, and her hand pressing down the heaving agony of her bosom. A confused murmur prevailed; a flitting step upon the stairs; and the next instant, Ursula, trembling and spectral, rushed to her feet.

“Lady—lady,” she faltered, burying her face in her robe, “I have seen the living, breathing father Dominick, or, I have seen his ghost!”

A mound of lead felt lightened from the heart of Sigrida—she looked up ; it was hope, it was gladness which illumined every feature. “ Father Dominick !” she repeated—“ Oh ! where ?—where ? I would kneel at his feet—I would supplicate his blessing.”

“ As I live, I saw him cross from the low postern opening to the sands,” rejoined Ursula ; “ his cowl was drawn close over his face, but it was his form, it was his step.”

“ Why then this terror ?” questioned Sigrida. “ Father Dominick bosoms peace, forbearance, charity : he comes to assure, not appal ; to comfort, not intimidate.”

“ Do you know father Dominick ?” asked Ursula, raising her head, and then again she shrieked, for the emaciated form of the monk darkened the door-way. Sigrida would have flown to his feet, but Ursula wildly grasped her knees ; she could only bend forward ; she could only stretch her arms towards him. He was

thinner, and far more feeble than when she last beheld him; and when advancing into the chamber, he threw back his cowl, he looked indeed the shadowy emblem of stricken and fast fading mortality.

“ Ursula,” said the monk, “ I am a breathing atom, like yourself: the debt entailed upon all flesh, remains yet unpaid. Fear not;” and bending a look of gentleness on Sigrida, “ How fare you, my daughter?” he enquired; and then he placed his spread hand upon her head, and murmured a benediction.

“ And me too—oh, father! and me too,” sobbed out Ursula; and in all the lowness of a contrite and bleeding spirit, dragging herself to his feet, she lay prostrate and weeping.

Father Dominick wiped a tear from his eye. “ Poor frail one!” he said; “ ’tis repentance, ’tis amendment, which must bring back peace—I will pray for you.”

“ Will you pardon! —will you forgive?” faltered Ursula—“ I, who have neglected

all your counsels—"I, who have abused all your kindness."

"I too have much to be forgiven: all who breathe have much to be forgiven," solemnly pronounced the monk. "Divine law enjoins forgiveness, even until seventy times seven. Sin no more, and your pardon be of heaven, not of man."

Ursula ventured one glance at the awfully serene features of her saintly admonisher—nought of earth save the fleshly tenement—beneficence enthroned upon his brow, he looked as a ministering angel, descending on the mission of universal love!

"I see you, my poor child, still worn with care and with perplexity," pursued father Dominick, addressing Sigrida. "Since we parted, sickness has been laid upon me, nigh unto death, else your sorrows and your dangers had not been neglected." And then he questioned of all which had passed, and listened to the detail of her trials with a sympathizing

interest; he wept at the agonized conflict of nature in the meeting and the parting at the door of the council-hall; hailed the visitation of fever and delirium, as a merciful dispensation of Providence; and blessed and encouraged the kindling seeds of reviving rectitude, which spoke in the actions and promises of Ursula.

“ This life, my daughter,” he said, “ is a tangled maze; a cup, alternately varied with sweets and with bitters, serving wisely to stay us from the extremes of unruly joy and intemperate sorrow. It is the foolish and unthinking, who make it their end, and their felicity: the true christian, weighs it, as a mere atom in the scale of eternity; considers it, an empty shadow, an air-bubble, a vapor, seen but to be dispelled: it will pass away, but the recompense of the pure at heart passeth not away; it will fade, it will return to its original chaos, whilst virtue soars to the heaven of heavens !”

Sigrida caught the holy enthusiasm,

playing as lambent fire o'er the death-wan features of the monk : she bosomed his zeal ; she clung to the firm prop of his reliance ; observation taught her the nothingness of human trust, and for the moment she felt elevated beyond the pressure of sublunary ill. “ A little patience, a little fortitude,” she pronounced, “ and the dream will be accomplished : returning to dust, we shall live, but in our faith, and our works.”

Father Dominick viewed her with surprise and admiration ; he joyed in the soul speaking in every perfect feature. “ Alike good as rare !” he articulated : “ and yet there are beings, there are fiends, who would mar that excellence, who would deface that pure emblem of earthly perfection.”

Sigrida thought of Crumpein, and the shudder at her heart, told her, that however enthusiasm may bury, nature cannot lie dead to sublunary ill.

“ O God !” asperated the monk, “ if it

seemeth fit to thy all-searching wisdom, bend the spirit of obduracy, and soften the hardened heart, like unto wax, to the impress of thy divine truths!"

Sigrida turned her speaking eyes upon him. "For my persecutor—mercy for my persecutor," she murmured.

"Yes, for Otho Crumpein," rejoined father Dominick: "daily, nightly, does a meek saint, wear the cold stone, in kneeling and praying for Otho Crumpein."

"His daughter?" asked Sigrida. "Yet if a father, how dare he sport with a father's feelings?—how dare he probe a father's heart?"

"The bold rebel to his Maker's ordinances, dares not much in outraging his fellow man," said the monk: "not the daughter—" steadfastly regarding her—"but the wife of Otho Crumpein."

"The wife—the wife of Crumpein!" repeated the horror-struck Sigrida, and every limb was palsied with the wild conflict of her emotions: anger, indigna-

tion, swelled her heart, and the lightning glance of her eye, betrayed outraged virtue, and bleeding writhing pride.

“Compose yourself, my poor child,” urged father Dominick: “be grateful, and be resigned: bless God, that you are snatched from the yawning precipice, down whose deadly brink, ignorance and confiding trust, and sensitive impulsive duty, had well nigh cast you;—bless God, that the mask is torn aside, and that neither sophistry or illusion can tempt you further. I see, I read, yours is not the virtue of human invention; ’tis a perfection of soul, which will soften every ill, which will yield consolation, spite of injustice, and malice, and tyranny. ’Tis you, poor lost one—” and he turned in stern reproof towards Ursula—’tis you, I would adjure; ’tis to the obdurate, to the hard of heart, I would thunder denouncement and judgment; you, the abettor, the graceless renegade to kindness and affection; you, the ungrateful, the——”

"Spare me—spare me," sobbed Ursula, and again she humbled herself to the dust: "oh, father! trample on me, kill me, but do not curse me."

"I would reach your conscience—I would awaken the sleeper—I would warn you of the hell hereafter. Think, when you were destitute, and humbled, and lost," pursued the man of God, "stricken with grief and with shame, the prey to misery and remorse, abandoned and neglected, left to endure and to die—who was it visited you with counsel?—who was it, shed tears, holy tears, upon your head?—who was it imparted succour?—who was it lured back the soother hope?—who was it opened the pass to honor and affrighted peace?—who was it——"

"The lady Gertrude," interrupted Ursula, yielding to a fresh burst of tears; "the gentle, the good, the pious wife of general Crumpein."

"And yet have you hid the tie, the

holy tie which bound them," reproachfully resumed father Dominick; " have you seen an innocent victim on the eve of immolation, nor breathed the name, which ought to live, ever in your heart, and on your lips."

" The name which does live in my heart," faltered Ursula—" the name, which has often hovered on my lips, but which fear—Oh think, holy father!"—and she ventured to raise her eyes to his face—" of the dreadful, the deadly vengeance, which would have followed such a disclosure. I could not have saved others, and I should have dragged upon my own head, sure destruction."

" Then, 'twas the fear of self, the dread of bodily pain, the terror of temporal punishment, which chained your lips, and stayed the course of duty," said the monk: " you would have murdered the soul's peace of an innocent being, because you trembled at the tyrant, whose power extended not beyond your life; you—"

"No, on my hopes of hereafter mercy," interrupting him, "I would not have dared a crime so black: had every chance of escape failed, every possibility of rescue vanished, I would have revealed the claims of the lady Gertrude, though death had been the punishment. Once, I might have acted differently; once, reward did blind, and power dazzle; but now, the gentleness, the forgiveness, the piety of her I was bribed to betray, has awakened in my heart, a craving after holiness, a thirsting after grace, superior to all the vain lures with which this world can beset me."

"May they grow!—may they encrease tenfold!" pronounced the monk—"may every tare be rooted out, and the good seed bring forth an abundant harvest!" And then he listened to all her desires and efforts to alleviate misery; her appeal to Stromfelt, and her reliance upon his promised aid and power.

"Ah! but we must do more than alle-

viate," said father Dominick; " we must snatch from utter irremediable destruction ; we must rescue innocence from the fangs of vice; we must embark all of mortal strength in the outraged cause of virtue. I myself will seek general Crumpein—I will hold to his view, a mirror, in which he shall see the blackness of his own deeds—I will——"

" You—you, father," interrupted the terrified Ursula. " Blessed Mary! how little do you know him!"

" I," rejoined the man of God, " with no weapon, save faith; with no breast-plate, save integrity. What is the wrath and the power of a sinful worm to me! in the discharge of my duty, I will stand before him! in the mightiness of my spiritual calling, I will pour out upon his head, the denunciations of hereafter vengeance."

" Ah father!" eagerly resumed Ursula, " he has forgotten all of heaven or of hell; he cares for nought save his own plea-

sure: habituated to blood and cruelty, he owns no law but inclination."

"And yet does a saint pray for him," said the monk; "does a being, whose sole wish is to do good, supplicate heaven for his conversion." He turned—he laid his spread hand upon the arm of the listening Sigrida—"the wife of Otho Crumpein," he pursued; "the exemplary, the pious lady Gertrude, abounds in the treasures of grace; victorious over her passions, courageous amidst the heaviest conflicts, more of angel than of mortal, her mind is all-perfect, her spirit all-divine!"

"Ah! how ill assorted—how fatally mismatched!" sighed Sigrida.

"'Tis the lot of earth," continued the father. "We see, and we lament; but our sight is bounded and imperfect. Incomprehensible to us are the movements of the eternal God: unlimited by time or space, he judges fitting, and far be it from us to cavil or repine! The lady Ger-

trude, once mourned with grief of heart, the dereliction of her lord ; she would have wooed him back by gentleness ; she would have wept over his errors, and joyed as in the return of the prodigal son : but he neglected, he despised, he trampled on the counsels of wisdom ; he made pleasure his pursuit, and vice his idol ; he——”

“ Could she love him ?”—can she love him ?” asked Sigrida.

“ She did love him,” replied father Dominick, “ until her soul shrunk in terror at his deformity ; she loved him, until piety and virtue took alarm, and then, in sackcloth and in ashes, she mourned the perversity of that love, she strove to expunge the trespass. It was but for a little season, that she repined at the cruel pressure of her ills, that she murmured at the colour of her destiny : rising, as it were into spirit, she martyred feeling at the shrine of holiness—she withdrew herself from the contamination of his example.”

" You knew her in all her sorrows?" asked Sigrida—" you counselled her in all her trials?"

" I shrived her," replied the monk, " ere she knew the meaning of transgression; ere, like a lamb, borne to the altar of sacrifice, she gave herself and her vast possessions to Crumpein. Steadfast in the discharge of her duty, she quitted her princely domain in North Jutland, to visit Sweden, to sojourn here in this very fortress. I accompanied her—I witnessed all her wrongs, and all her struggles—I traced the rapid strides of vice and immorality, the growing ambition, the deadly progress of guilt and crime—I urged reformation; but it was vain—I preached of the joys of heaven of the pangs of hell—I thundered denouncement and wrath: but my breath mingled unheeded with the common air; a perverse and wicked spirit drove all of virtue from the breast of Crumpein; deliberately, systematically base, drunk dizzy with the deceitfulness

of the world, and the giant strides of power, he despised the partner, by law his own; he spurned the gentle heart, which wept blood o'er his trespasses."

"Ah father!" sobbed Ursula, "it was then, that charity found out the den of my wretchedness; that, like unto the good Samaritan, you poured in oil and wine, bound up my wounds, and soothed me into gladness."

"The lady Gertrude," said father Dominick; "under heaven, it was her alms, it was her favor."

"Bless her! bless her!" emphatically pronounced Ursula: "for you, father, you are blessed, thrice blessed, already!"

The monk murmured a crado, then meekly crossing his hands upon his breast,
"May peace rest upon all!"

"Did the lady Gertrude voluntarily quit the fortress?" asked Sigrida: "did she abandon the task, because all hope of reformation had ceased?"

"She returned to Denmark," resumed

the man of God, “when the actions of Crumpein became too flagrantly base for innocence to tolerate: yet, even then, even now, she loves his soul; and if she could snatch it from the lime-twigs of guilt, if she could mould it to repentance, if she could know it, a fervent, though late offering to holiness, she would exult in the regeneration; she would glory in the amend of grace.”

“Alas! I fear, the blot upon her peace, will never fade, will never die away,” sighed Sigrida.

“The workings of Providence are mysterious and closely veiled,” rejoined father Dominick, “too deep, too inscrutable, for finite judgment to penetrate. Man is himself hard to resolve: engaged in a never-failing conflict, his life, here below, is one scene of strife and struggle. If he bridles his passions, if he conquers his own will, he becomes an object of admiration, of emulation, of glory; if he yields to the tyranny of sense, if he sinks

the slave of the ~~Devil~~, he lives the curse of his fellows, he is the mortal enemy of his own soul. Yet is not the blackest hue of turpitude excluded the grace of conversion—"All power is of God;" and the hardened and the profane, the apostate to holiness, the renegade to divine law, may tremulously bow the knee, and pour forth the heart-touching effusions of penitence! The wife of Crumpein, lives in that hope—bosoms that hope; her zeal is undying; she spares no pains, no toils, no watchings; stretching forth her hand, she would lure back the prodigal, she would snatch him from the fearful gulf on which he totters. With reluctance, and with tears, she quitted Sweden: yet even then, she lost not sight of the graceless object of her solicitude;—she left here, in this fortress, an observer; a faithful, an unsuspected recorder, of all his actions, and all his movements; a spy, humble and powerless, but vigilant in the discharge of a duty so solemnly enjoined."

“ Ah, father!” ~~and~~ Sigrida grasped the arm of the monk, eager, anxious for the sequel.

“ Yes, my poor child, it was through this medium, that prepared to spirit you hence, in the known absence of general Crumpein, I stole upon the hour of solitary communion. Possessed of a key opening the back postern, I dared the chance encounter of eyes: content in the conscientious discharge of my vocation, my errand was the salvation of a soul, and my courage rose invulnerable. What cared I for all the armament which sin could wield against me? I submitted to policy, because I would ensure success; because I would rescue from bonds so galling. Cased in the adamantine shield of holiness, what cared I for all the rage of impotent malice, for all the mighty phalanx of prosperous power! Crumpein dared not harm me—dared not brave the anathema of holy church, zealous in the protection of her servants.”

"Alas! father," said Ursula, "you know not the darings of guilt: what man dare do, that dare general Crumpein."

"He dares not his own perdition," quick replied the monk—"he dares not the ban of the holy see. Vice may be bold in declamation, but her base is feeble, her heart rotten: like the house on the sand, she sinks, crumbled, and scattered, by the first adverse blast." And then addressing Sigrida—"Authorized by the meek and lowly candidate for hereafter glory," he continued; "by her whose deeds are the effusions of true charity and singular benevolence, I came to seek you out—to remove you from the contamination of error; but my errand failed in the firmer calls of filial duty. You know, how I tried, how I suspected, how I quitted you: but you know not, that disease alone has kept me thus long from my charge. Alas! time, present, and past, faded from memory. I lay in the cell of an adjoining convent,

tended, ministered to, by charity; incapable of exertion, incapable of explanation; away from all to which long habit had endeared me, yet apparently gasping out my life at the foot of the cross. But my hour was not come: it pleased Thee, oh God! to spare me to a fitter season: be the thin-spun remnant of my strength—" and he raised his eyes in pious supplication—" to the furtherance of Thy honor, and my own glory!"

"How little did I guess our proximity," sighed Sigrida—how little did I anticipate the cause of absence!"

"You could have mourned, but not have aided," observed father Dominick. "Ignorance, my daughter, is often bliss; for grievous would be the ill, if the mind could resolve the evil of the coming hour. I have sojourned in that convent, I will sojourn in that convent, until I can aid you with more than prayers. My aim is to remove you from the power of Crumpein, and my thoughts and my exertions shall not slumber."

"Think—think of my dear father," urged Sigrida. The monk crossed his hands upon his breast, and sighed. "Alas!" and she burst into tears, "your mercy and your influence cannot pierce his dungeon, cannot sooth the anguish of his tortured spirit."

"The colour of the times, the pressure of local ill, gives fatal scope to authority," answered father Dominick: "havock and cruelty lords it over justice and innocence; despotism grinds to powder the rights of inheritance, and tyrannous caprice ravages all of human security. A mind, a heart, like Crumpien's, triumphs in the base advantage, and fain working upon the fervor of affection, would turn all to his own vile purpose. Yet, heaven—heaven—" and he spoke with ardour and with holy zeal—"cannot, will not sanction iniquity: the bolt of eternal wrath, will smite the head of the sacrilegious blasphemer, in the full blossom of his unrepented crimes. Fear not, my

daughter—I will pray for you at the altar of our worship—I will labour for you, through a night of wakefulness and watching. Go to the dungeon of your father; and tell him, that a poor brother of Saint Francis, toils for his weal, and for yours."

"Ah, father! must I lose you?" and Sigrida clung to his dark habit, as though safety dwelt within the shadow of his mantle.

"For a little season," replied the monk. "I go, my child, to the duties of my cloister. May peace, and all good angels, tend you! To-morrow, we meet again."

CHAPTER XXIV.

My arm, my life, my soul, is anchored on
This matter, and nought, save heav'n, can stay me.

THE 26th. of December, 1520, rose without a cloud : the blue vault of heaven stretched o'er a waste of snow, o'er pendant icicles, rocks canopied with hoarfrosts, leafless forests, and desolated nature :—it stretched too, over a moving busy throng of brooding speculating patriots : crowds of men, women, and children, gathering from all quarters of the province, deserting every hamlet, and assembling in celebration of the annual *Festival of Mora* : hilarity's native smile beaming o'er the health-dappled features of the youthful ; the aged, contrasting their bland appearance, with care and gloom : for even the untaught sons of

labour, imbibing the sombre colouring of the times, surveyed the past with horror, the present with regret, the future with fear and trembling.

In each corner of the village, were scattered, groups of young men and maidens, habited in their gayest attire, and joyous in the name of holyday : and here and there, amidst the dappled concourse, the reflective, the philosophical, the would-be statesmen, politicians, and warriors, canvassed the growing powers of Denmark, and murmured at the wreck of freedom.

Long, like the inward groaning of subterranean fires, had the spirit of dissatisfaction prevailed, needing but the kindling flint to blow it into flame ; long had the free-born mind festered beneath the gyves of despotism ; long, had the name, and the authorities of king Christiern, been as deadly poison to health and life. The language of opposition, the propagations of policy, had taken wing ; and Rumour, with her hundred tongues, had

talked of revolt, of a leader, of a champion, until—grounding their hopes, on their numbers and their strength, on the mighty bulwarks which nature had implanted, on their mountains, their rocks, and their forests—the Dalecarlians believed, that their first onset in the field, would crush at once the tyranny, and humble the bold bravado of their enemies.

But though in theory, the potent sway of Denmark was so easy clipped, though the Herculean strides of inborn valour promised so highly, what could a wild, unformed, undisciplined horde effect? Like the waves of the mighty ocean, banded, tossed by every gathering breeze, how could they submit to order, how yield to the guiding sway of command? Fear bleached the cheeks of the elders at this new conjured evil; for they read, in the simultaneous rush of manual courage, ruin and overthrow; in the lack of rule, the blast of their flower and their pride! Alas! Rumour but added ano-

ther lie to her swollen catalogue ; no leader, no champion, advanced, and a universal silence, and a universal gloom, spread itself throughout the vast multitude : the sun shone, but it shone on discontent and repinings ; the wind blew, but it dissipated not the dense fogs of despair.

It was at this important, this auspicious moment, that a group of fate-fraught interest, stood, as though by magic, in the throng ; that the silver-haired curate of Saverdsio, supported by the arm of strength—on one side, by the general of the Swedish horse, on the other, by his ardent, his heroic nephew, appeared at *the Festival of Mora*. His step was feeble, but enthusiasm had borrowed the vigour of youth ; his cheeks were crimsoned ; his eyes flashed living fire ; his soul seemed to labour with its load of greatness ;—he looked the patriarch, the father of the world he taught ! Xavier's gaze was riveted upon him—Gustavus be-

held nought save the assemblage of his fellow countrymen.

A cry, an astounding shout, broke upon the stillness: the labourers in the mine of Oernetz, recognizing the pretended Segiswold, pressed eagerly to his side, every head unbonneted, every tongue chained.

The gracious smile dispensed again as in the mine—his hand spread upon his heart—his looks replete with energy and feeling.

“I come in the name of Sweden,” he exclaimed—“I appeal to the descendants of an heroic race: our fathers sleep in the tomb; but their courage, their patriotism, is a precious legacy, dispensed and descending, bequeathed as a legitimate inheritance, wherewith to defend our rights, and regain our independence. Swedes! brethren! fellow countrymen!” and his arms were extended as though in amity with all—“shall we open the door to our invaders?—shall we sleep, while

they pillage our homes, and our hopes?—shall we tamely submit our necks to the yoke, when nature, when common instinct, points out opposition?—shall we, like the horse, who knows not his strength, bite the bit, and wear the bridle?—shall we curry favor of our conquerors?—shall we meanly, dastardly, cower at the feet of the inhuman Christiern? Look around; behold our riches and our hopes destroyed; our fields, our garners, our inheritance, given to pillage; wrested from our hands, and consigned to our lordly masters; our promises all blighted in the bud, our prosperity all scattered by the hurricane of persecution! Look around; behold, as far as heaven is from earth, so far is mercy from the heart of Christiern! Let him preach of protection, of indemnification; let him ground his claims on the union of Calmar, on that pernicious policy, which the Semiramis of the north so dexterously effected; on that disastrous edict, already deluged in a sea of

blood. Alas ! what are his words ?—what are his promises ? mere breath, mere air ; like the bubble, so inflated, yet so empty : he moves with fire and sword, with death and ruin ; in his stride, he depopulates, he destroys ; he heaps in every corner, monuments of his wrath and of his vengeance ; he bosoms the malice of hell, and scatters the flames of Atè ; he saturates our earth with human blood, our cities with the life's stream of our senators. Think, oh think, of the massacre of Stockholm!" and his voice faltered, and his cheeks and his lips grew pale—" muse on the death-groan of our consuls, our magistrates, our nobles, our fathers ; the props of the state, the guardians of the public liberty, arraigned, condemned, murdered, butchered — denied the comforts and consolations vouchsafed the vilest criminal — the benefits of the church, the holy rites of religion. Think, of a fierce soldiery, let loose upon the defenceless, the unoffending citizens ; the scenes of outrage and slaughter ; the

shrieks, the maddening shrieks of anguish and despair:—think too—” and tears deluged his cheeks—“ when this destroying fiend, shall come in the pride of his strength, loaded with his blasts, his mil-dews, his thunders, his lightnings;—when here, even here, he shall bring his besom of fate, and pour forth the teeming plagues of his fury——”

“ Never—never!” and a hundred voices spoke at once.

“ Already has he dispersed his army into the several provinces,” pursued Gustavus, regardless of the clamour—“ Christiern wars with the whole race—Christiern swears the destruction of the whole kingdom: noble or ignoble, prince or peasant, human victims must establish his authority, and all must pay the forfeit, who have dared the defence of their country. Once offended, he never pardons; once hating he never forgets: and he is offended, and he hates you, ye men of Dalecarlia, because your valour and your intrepidity has made him quail in

the battles of our late administrator; because, attached to your native privileges, yours has been the last province, to yield to the yoke of his authority. Treacherous and base, under the pretext of winter quarters, already are his troops on the march: soon, conducted hither, will he scatter his fire-brands amongst you; will his enraged soldiery banquet on your industry; will——”

“First, on our lives,” burst from the crowd, and the cry of defiance seemed unanimous.

“Rise, and defeat their purpose,” implored the prince, glowing with renovated enthusiasm; “rise, my brave countrymen, rise in arms; greet the forces of Denmark with Swedish valour; cast off the bonds of Christiern, and strive for freedom, spite of wounds and death!”

“Who will discipline us to the charge? —who train us to the struggle?” asked several voices.

“Nature, and your own hearts,” eager-

ly replied the royal hero, “in one, asserting the freeborn spirit of man, and spurning the strides of despotism !”

“Who will furnish arms ?”

“Industry—perseverance—that high and genuine feeling, which scorns the ban of slavery !”

“And who,” demanded a veteran, advancing from the crowd, “will lead us on to action ?”

The prince cast off the muffling cloak, veiling the splendor of his habit: he stood in all his majesty, towering, dignified, exalted; the sun shining on his uncovered head, the north wind blowing back his dark hair, and baring his polished forehead. One glance of fire seemed to encompass the whole multitude: he sprang from the side of de Stiernhelm—he mounted a rough hillock—he stretched his arms to heaven—and then extending them, as though in favor, in protection to all—“I,” he pronounced, in a voice, so full, so deep, that it seemed

to reach every ear, and penetrate every heart—"I, Gustavus Erickson, born of your kings, the sworn foe of Christiern, and the life-devoted champion of Sweden!"

The pause was deep and solemn; and when it was broken, it was broken by shouts which seemed to rend the vaulted sky; exclamations too, and bursts of admiration, bursts of heroism, mingled: every head was uncovered—every knee bent; some, humbling themselves in distance—others pressing to his very feet.

His hand was suddenly grasped—he heard sobs—he felt warm tears distilled upon it: yet was the clasp of fervent interest but the clasp of a moment; it relaxed with coming thought—it yielded to distant respect, to colder homage: he turned—he looked down: it was Ludolph, bearing the little Axel, who lay prostrate before him—Ludolph, his kind, his generous host! Axel, his earliest benefactor!

The flaxen locks, the blue eyes, the cherub smile of the lovely boy, riveted his gaze:—he seemed as a messenger of love, scattering hope and joy; as an emblem of purest truth, bearing the covenant of submission and of confidence! Impulsively, he raised him in his arms—he pressed him to his heart—he kissed his mouth and his forehead—and then, with a benignant smile, he held him up in sight of the vast multitude.

“Behold,” he exclaimed, “this innocent candidate for the rights of posterity, this unconscious pleader for the indemnification of future generations—this child, this prop of a parent’s hope: behold, in him, ye fathers, your own offspring; behold their opening springs, their years of promise, crowned, through you, with glory, or doomed, as now, to wither beneath the blighting sway of Denmark. Snatch—snatch them, I implore ye, from the fearful brink; save them from living death; rend off each ignominious shackle,

and give them life's best blessing—liberty! My friends, my brethren, my compatriots, accept in me a leader; receive at my hands, the standard of our country, the golden crowns of Sweden: be they, as precious spells, as holy phylacteries, to establish, one heart, one impulse; to bind us all in the one pure love of freedom—to redeem us from the curse of Christiern's blood-stained rule?"

"Be our leader! be our defender! be our deliverer! Freedom! freedom or death!" and the shout again burst from every tongue; and the feeble might of the little Axel, aping his father's movements, joined hand and voice in the deafening din.

The burning flame of exultation and of gratitude—like summer lightning, vivid and playful—spoke in the blush, the smile, the bend of Gustavus: he relinquished the pigmy patriot; and as the sounds died away, as the acclamations ceased, with confidence and feeling he resumed:

“ One seasonable vigorous resistance, and all will be accomplished ; one universal levy, and liberty revives ! Liberty, my friends ! life’s prime prerogative ! reason’s vital breath ! law’s best and surest prop ! the spring of hope ! the soul’s soul of society ! O, win it, earn it, snatch it from ruin and from fate ! Show to the expecting world, the courage and the vigour of your heroic ancestors : with their name, inherit their dauntless spirit, and their noble daring. Let us fight—let us run the race of those illustrious patriots, who maintained their independence, spite of a host of foes ; who, for whole centuries, expelled the tyrant Dane, and crushed the lawless hopes of usurpation. What though they double our numbers in the field ? self-preservation, and a just revenge, will brace with nerves of iron :—what though we fall ? the grave of honor is a better meed than life bought with disgrace !”

He ceased, and heaven smiled upon his pleadings : a bright and joyous augury

filled every breast: the sun still shone, and the wind unvarying, blew from the north from the moment he appeared among them. Superstition caught, superstition treasured the token, hailed it as a preterhuman signal of success and future conquest; as the oracle of Delphos, pouring out prosperity, and joy, and favor!

The elders communed for a moment; but the generous ardor of youth, swept, like a resistless torrent, all of caution or policy: they joined in the wrongs, in the sufferings of the royal hero; they espoused all his feelings, and all his resentments; they shed tears over the massacre of Stockholm; and in the warmth of their grief and their indignation, swore to revenge the murder of their countrymen, to disown the authority of Christiern, and to wreak a full and signal vengeance upon every Danish subject.

The Festival of Mora changed its colour of rejoicing and mirth: the smile and

the jest vanished, and nought, save revilings, and threats, and hatred to the common enemy succeeded : a new aspect, a new spirit beamed in every countenance ; courage and intrepidity arose from the trance of inaction, and all alike seemed emulous to vie with the achievements of their heroic ancestors.

Assailed with prayers, and oaths, and protestations, Gustavus hailed all that his heart most coveted ; a warlike people, awaking from slumber, animated with zeal, and yielding themselves to exertion and to vigour.

“ Lead us to the foe !” they exclaimed —“ lead us on to conquest ! Our general ! our champion ! our deliverer ! no bonds—no bonds—give us liberty, or give us death !”

“ Spoken like yourselves, my fellow soldiers ; the choice is glorious ; the election worthy of the aim ! death—death or liberty ! Yes, my brave friends, we’ll to the strife—we’ll drive the tyrants hence

—we'll teach the vaunting Dane, that valour but from opposition grows ; that men are mighty, when combined, they wrestle for inheritance : though planted on a steep, high as yon clouds, and rugged as our fortune, we'll snatch the palm of freedom, and wrest our hopes from pillage!"

"With heavens high aid!" piously pronounced de Stiernhelm, and religious fervour animated his placid eyes, and patient resignation, and mild confidence, spoke in his wan countenance. "'Tis for some wise and hidden end, the burdened land groans beneath the prosperous strides of tyranny. Man sees not beyond the present hour, sees not the coming storm, but revels in the sunshine : doubtless, our secret sins are manifold ; we dare the trespass, yet we loathe the rod ; we snatch the gilded bait, yet murmur at the forfeit." He bowed his aged head, in conviction and in humbleness of spirit, then sinking on his knees, and elevating his clasped hands :

"Oh, Almighty Searcher of all hearts!" he asperated—"Purifier of the impure! great and omnipresent Ruler! who humbleth, and upholdeth, according to thy boundless wisdom, graciously hear the prayers of these Thy people, assembled in commemoration of that era of blessedness, in which life sprung from death, and hope from rayless darkness! Smile on these our efforts—aid these our struggles: direct our arms—direct our inmost thoughts: check the fell wishes, that with impious haste, measure Thy boundless sway, and teach us, not to murmur, but to yield! Grant us patience under every dispensation of Thy will; cleanse us from our own deeds, from pride of heart, intemperance, hate; from the rank stream of our offences: avenge the fall, of all who have already bled, of all who may bleed, in this our cause! Pluck from his boasted height, the pirate foe; from his grasp, the tyrant rein of power: restore a nation's rights, a people's heritage; redeem a sinking land. Bless, we implore Thee,

bless the efforts of patriotism: inspire one kindling spirit of unanimity: rouse the drooping energy of action: give—give us freedom; give us a giant's strength; give—give to Sweden, the halcyon reign of prosperity!"

For a little season, his voice had grown into strength; but ere the close, it faltered, and now did it sink inaudible: yet—as the flame, which still consumes, though the fabric be fallen—did spirit linger, did zeal strive to combat the weakness of decay: he arose; he clung to the arm of his exulting nephew; he chased away the tear, the only symbol of infirmity; he strove again to speak, but enthusiasm spreading throughout the multitude, nought, for many minutes, save loud and incessant shouts were heard. It seemed as though for the first time the people awakened to the pressure of their grievances; as though, for the first time, they bosomed the possibility of deliverance! All turned, all clung to Gustavus,

as the flexile ivy clingeth to the firm oak ; all sought, all hailed Gustavus, as a sun, appearing in a dark land, and dissipating clouds and barrenness !

“ We give our flower and strength,” exclaimed an elder, stepping forward, and speaking in the voice of the people—“ we give our sons—we give too the remnant of our own power: for though prayer be the best weapon in the hands of age, the patriot heart beats nimbly for the strife, when violence and wrong press to our very thresholds. Lead us on, brave prince ! illustrious warrior! lead us to the field : become our pilot, our inspirer, our refuge ; armed in one cause, we'll dare a host of Danes, for freedom is the spur, and life alone the forfeit.”

“ Yes, in one cause—one great, one glorious cause!” exclaimed the prince, and heroism, and trust, and generous ardour, beamed in his sunny eyes—“ one mighty cause, which weds us all to enterprise ; the cause of law and jus-

tice, of nature and humanity ; the outraged cause, which calls on every Swede, quick to unsheathe his sword, nor yield it but in victory : for sure, our wrongs, unnumbered, like the countless sands, cry out for vengeance. We fight for life, for country, kindred, freedom, home : to crush a vile usurper, to drive the invader hence, to save our lands from pillage, and our hopes from ruin, we here, in one firm bond unite ; one just, one holy bond, which heaven and nature sanctifies !”

“ One bond ! one bond !” broke from a thousand tongues ; “ gratitude, the bond of our allegiance !” and again, long and reverberating shouts arose ; shouts, like the dinning thunder, gathering in peals, then sinking into silence.

Thrice did de Stiernhelm raise his drooping head from the shoulder of his nephew ; thrice did he wave his shadowy hand in token of attention ; his glance, inspiration ; his look, the martyred saint escaping to beatitude. Till rallying, as

the dying taper's flash, “ Bless—bless this day, this *Festival of Mora!*” he pronounced ; “ this hallowed prelude of a nation’s freedom! this bright, this glorious epoch in Sweden’s archieves ! My God, I thank Thee ! This sublime, this joyous spectacle, is the work of Thy grace ! Thy mercy flows like oil into the wounded bosoms of Thy servants : without Thy sanctifying spirit, nought could be essayed, nought accomplished : Thou directest the heart of man ; Thou upholdest all his goings ; Thou lightest his secret counsels, or turneth his wisdom into folly ! Weak, and frail, and prone to imperfection, I possess no merit, save the desire of imitating the saints : all is of Thee, through Thee, and in Thee ! The words of every preacher are but empty sounds ; the combined eloquence of man, vapid and barren, unless rendered fruitful unto holiness. This day—this memorable day—before Thee, who heareth the words of our lips, and readeth the thoughts of our hearts,

do we pledge the vow to each other; the vow of firmness and perseverance, of faith and zeal, in this our stress for liberty. Sanctify, we pray Thee, this our compact of mortal dependance; bless—bless our labours and our struggles, our toils and our woes! Inspire us with one heart, one arm of strength and vigour: gift our princely leader, with wisdom, temperance, and intrepidity; with the harmlessness of the dove, and the subtilty of the serpent: gift us, his followers, with submission, patience, endurance, and obedience; that aided by Thy favor, surmounting and overcoming, smiling Peace may again return—Plenty strew her roses o'er our dwellings—Content glow within our hearts—and Industry reap her sure reward! Lighten our darkness; train our souls unto Thee, our hopes unto salvation: teach us, direct us to Thy worship! May we—may—" His voice faltered—it failed—it ceased: his limbs trembled; his face became colour-

less as death; he evidently struggled with contending weakness, yet the elasticity of the spirit prevailed. “ May we never tire in glorifying Thee, thou Father of light! thou Parent of angels and of men!” he pursued; “ may we attach ourselves more and more unto Thee, and may our occupation be Thy praise! When dissolving our tabernacles of clay, Thou shalt raise us above worlds, and suns, and planets, may our souls—” He ceased—a sigh fluttered on his lips—he fell, not dead, but motionless into the arms of Xavier.

CHAPTER XXV.

And oft does hope,
Like meteor-flame, tangling midst bog and brake,
Shine bright, then fade, and leave us rayless.

IT was near midnight, when the given signal from without, summoned Sigrida on her adventurous errand. Ursulá was to tend her to the dismal entrance of the keep; when within the keep, Stromfelt was to pilot her through the dark intricacies. She heeded not danger, or difficulty, or fatigue; she heeded not the cold blasts of the night-wind, nor the pitiless peltings of the drifting sleet: all of external horrors were lost in the one bright ray of expectation: it was her father, her persecuted father, who nerved her on to heroism; who flushing her pale cheek with the vivid fever of hope, quickened the lagging

pulses at her heart, with a sensation almost amounting to pleasure. She should behold her father—she should converse with her father—she should chase despair from his stone pillow—she should wipe from his brow, the cold, the deadly dews of anguish: he would bless the interposing mercy of father Dominick; he would counsel her through the intricate maze in which she was so fearfully tangled.

“Ah! and he will strengthen me, he will uphold me, in all the complicated windings of my destiny; he will enrich me with his blessing, and anoint me with the precious balsam of his tears. Yes, yes, my father,” she mused, as she crossed the court-yard, “I shall return, resigned and patient; more submissive, more holy, through the quickening breath of your wisdom!” But when she entered the narrow archway of the keep, dark, and damp, as the yawning jaws of the sepulchre; when she heard the harsh

grating of the bolts, and the hollow rattle of the ponderous chain securing the massy gate of entrance, her spirit drooped ; her eyes filled with tears ; her thoughts rested solely on her father's sufferings, and her very heart trembled within her. Ursula pressed her hand in silent sympathy, and then she fled ; and without the exchange of a single syllable, Sigrida entered the flinty passage.

The lamps were so widely scattered, and their light so faint and indistinct, that all seemed enveloped in one vapoury mist, like the death-shroud, half veiling the ghastly relics of mortality : yet Sigrida traced the dark outline of the Danish soldier, and so lonely, and so desolate were her feelings, that she stretched forth her hand in involuntary terror. She would have spoken, but he motioned silence, and quick passing his arm around her waist, he half raised her from the damp cold pavement, and hurried onwards, scarce yielding time for breath or thought.

Threading several winding branches, and descending a flight of steep steps, he paused almost in utter darkness.

"God of omnipotence!" asperated Sigrida; and then again he snatched her up, and she felt him tremble, and she heard his breath quicken as he held her. She struggled, but he grasped her with a nerve of iron.

"Lady, your father," he whispered, and instantly she became submissive and passive. He spoke no more, but with a fleet step, he continued to traverse the subterranean. She heard the clank of chains—she heard a deep and hollow groan; so broken, so mournful, it sounded like the anguish of the flitting spirit: —it pierced from her ear to her soul! Was it the voice of her father? She looked up—she strained her eyes—she tried to penetrate to the farther extent of the passage. One solitary lamp emitted a feeble ray; it fell upon an iron grating, and at that grating the soldier paused.

He drew a ponderous key from beneath his cloak ; he applied it to the ward ; with giant force he pushed open the gate, and pointing onwards :

“ Three steps,” he whispered. “ Be wary, lady.”

She descended—she heard the gate close after her—she stood for a moment in awful listening expectancy, and then she strove to descry surrounding horrors. The light was pale, as the dewy blush of evening, yet it gleamed through the square vault in which she found herself. It was arched, and low, thick mildewed with unwholesome damps, although the rough blasts of winter moaned shrilly through the grating. In one corner was scattered some loose straw, half covered by torn threadbare scraps, forming a kind of coverlet.

God of mercy ! was it a human form which lay shivering beneath ?

Impelled by that impulse of desperation which so often dares the worst, her

eyes almost closing against the conviction she sought, she tottered towards the miserable rest of the unfortunate prisoner—she heard a lengthened moan—she stooped—she bent forward: it was no illusion; it was the bloodless, the almost marbled features of her father! His eyes were closed, as though wooing the momentary bliss of forgetfulness: one emaciated hand pillow'd his cheek; the other lay upon the coverlet. Sigrida sunk upon her knees—she spoke not, but she bowed her lips upon that cold, that shadowy hand: the action dissipated the mere blank of absorption—Ladislaus started into life.

Was it a being, “enskied and sainted!” was it the bright vision of another world! For a moment he held her to his bosom, forgetful of bonds and persecution; but soon did her sobs recall him to the reality of his fallen fortune; he glanced around, and terror and indignation mingled with the mighty rush of sensibility.

"My child," he murmured, when tears and half breathed blessings left room for words, "I find you here, and the measure of my woe runs over;—I see you here, and the calm of resignation flies. Oh, God!" and his hands and his eyes were uplifted, "rather would I deck her in grave-clothes—rather would I mourn over the early cropt flower of my hopes!" and again he yielded to such wild anguish that Sigrida trembled for his senses.

"We cannot—we must not choose our own destinies," she whispered. "Bear up my father: heaven wills this trial of our faith: the cup is bitter; 'tis full of gall, yet may honey mingle in its dregs."

"Cherub! comforter!" But when he raised his eyes to the matchless beauty of her face and form; when he traced the momentary glory of the soul within, spreading as a rich and radiant burnish over every speaking feature, the deadly groan of despair succeeded; he sprung from the wretched pallet; he paced the

dungeon with a frenzied step : suddenly pausing, he snatched her arm ; he sternly perused the fatal lure to guilt. “ I see it all,” he exclaimed ; “ I trace every subtle winding in this horrid labyrinth. Mark me, Sigrida—” and the lightning of his eye was almost scathing—“ if you smile upon the dastard ravisher—if you redeem my life by the shadow of concession—if you suffer the poison of his passion to pollute your ear ;—nay, girl, if you purchase my privilege to breathe, by tolerating the mere presence of your country’s mortal foe ; by all we hold most sacred—by all our hopes, here and hereafter, the blister of—”

“ Father ! father ! ” shrieked out Sigrida, and she precipitated herself at his feet, and clung wildly to his knees—“ you know not what you say—you know not what you do. Oh, hear me ! bless me ! pity me ! do not—do not curse me ! ”

“ Curse you, my child ! curse you, my darling ! ” and the heart of Ladislaus, in

one moment, was softened even to woman's weakness ; he cast himself beside her, and as his aching head rested on her shoulder, his tears deluged her face. "No, no, no!" and all his native tenderness rose triumphant—"I can die, but I cannot curse you : curse you, my child ; curse you, Sigrida :—how—how could you dream it?" and again, with maddened fervor, he strained her to his bosom.

"Alas ! it seems all a dream," sobbed Sigrida ; "a sad, sad dream ! But listen to me, dear, dearest father ; for something like hope breaks through the clouds. I see a ray—I see a heavenward beam ! It is not the age for miracle, but mercy is the attribute of Omnipotence !" And then, seated, with her hands clasped in his, and her eyes raised earnestly to his face, she succinctly related every occurrence which had transpired since her removal from Rustgoden.

Ah ! how varied were the sensations of the parent, as he listened to the fearful

detail of her trials and her sufferings! alternately, the sport of wounded pride, of rage, and of tenderness: now panting for revenge; now mourning his inability to rescue; now exulting in her courage; now weeping her woes; now pitying the torture of her feelings; and now glorying in the bursts of her indignation! He too hailed the visit of father Dominick as a sure signal of forthcoming favor; he too joyed in the penitence of Ursula; and he added the name of Stromfelt in the blessing which passed his lips: but Crumpein was a blot, a blister on the fair face of creation—

“ Seal’d in *his* nativity,
The slave of nature and the son of hell!”

Crumpein was as a blight upon everything wholesome; a mildew, upon the hopes and life of his fellow men.

“ The fit agent of the tyrant Christiern, he brings ruin in his train,” exclaimed the shuddering Ladislaus: “ wading through oppression and blood, trampling on all of

public good, fain would he stab the soul of domestic peace, and desolate the solitary garner of comfort. Curses—curses light on the ravisher! the curses of heaven, the curses of a heartbroken father, rest——”

“ Forbear—forbear!” implored Sigrida; and with fearless tenderness, the offspring of happier days, she placed her soft white hand upon his lips. “ Remember, a saint prays for Crumpein,” she pursued; “ oh, rather, let us join our prayers to her prayers, and supplicate his conversion!”

“ As well may we seek for roses on the snows of Zembla,” rejoined Ladislaus. “ That man, Sigrida, would blast a world: he cares not for lives; he cares not for human misery. I could forgive him all the woes and all the indignities he has heaped upon my head: but your innocence, your honor; my child, my child, how can I dwell on that, and not curse?”

“ Let us rather dwell upon the possibility of rescue, my dear father,” urged

Sigrida. This is a shifting changing world, and heaven's servant is zealously labouring in our cause."

" Yes, with honor," firmly pronounced Ladislaus ; " but not by one concession, which could paint your cheek with the blush of shame. Mark me, Sigrida : here, in this grave of wretchedness, in this sink of despair—cold, and rayless, and desolate, as though it were my tomb—mark, and bosom my words. Should all of mortal trust fail ; should the bright hope which now buoys you into courage, sink, wrecked amidst the clash of circumstances ; should tyranny stretch to its utmost limit, extend to its furthest verge ; should Crumpein drag me from this dungeon ; should he murder me before your eyes ; should he tarry, with the fatal cord around my neck, and urge you to deliverance :—not for a moment, not for a second, not for the twinkling of an eye, pause in hesitation :—let him hack my body, but not my fame ; let him despoil

me of existence, but not of honor." He ceased—he gazed steadfastly upon her, but she spoke not; heavy sighs swelled her bosom; scalding tears streamed down her cheek. "Promise me, my child," he resumed, "and promise me, as you would crave my blessing in my dying hour, never to redeem my life by the sacrifice of yourself: nay, swear to me, Sigrida; swear by the God of holiness! swear by the shades of our martyred countrymen! swear too by the spirit of your sainted mother!—though my blood should sprinkle you from the scaffold—never to live the victim of Crumpein."

"God defend me from the conflict!" sobbed the almost convulsed Sigrida. "Oh, my father!" and she cast on him such a look of wild agony that it pierced into his soul: for many minutes the parent alone lived, and he wept, and he sobbed, as he held her to his bosom: but soon did the pangs of wounded pride, of outraged sensibility return; he saw her in

the hands of his enemy, powerless, defenceless, assailed by all the sophistry of persuasion, barbarously tortured to her own undoing.

“Swear to me, Sigrida,” he urged, “should the conflict come, should heaven will the sacrifice; swear, to die, rather than yield to the damning projects of Crumpein!”

“God—God defend me from the conflict!” again burst from the heart, from the lips of Sigrida.

“Yet it may come,” pursued Ladislaus—“it may break in thunder—it may astound your senses. Swear to me, girl, and bear away my blessing; or—or—”

“For heaven’s sake—for mercy’s sake, my father, my dear kind father!” and she lay gasping, nearly dying at his feet.

“Sigrida,” he resumed, in accents of mournful solemnity, “the time for decision is arrived. I crave but a balm to soften my last agonies, but an assurance to give peace to my parting hour. Rouse

your fortitude: heretofore have you been the tender obedient child; rally, I beseech you, into the courageous guardian of your own honor.

“ Speak to me—counsel me, my father—” and she fixed her streaming eyes upon his face—“ infuse into me your spirit; teach me how to rise above my trials.”

“ I would steel you against the enervating workings of sensibility,” rejoined Ladislaus; “ or rather, I would destroy the possibility of irresolution, by a bond, sacred and holy. My child, my blessed child, I would return you pure to your kindred sky, spite of the fiend-like plottings of this infernal Dane: I would counteract all his machinations, and secure you from the dangers of your own impulsive feeling; I——”

“ Be at peace, my father—I will strive—I will labour to be all you wish.”

“ The benevolence of this holy man,” eagerly pursued Ladislaus, “ may spare

us both the struggle ; heaven may graciously avert the pending ill. For my own life, knowing you in safety, gratefully would I lay down the burden. Fly then, Sigrida ; fly to this lady Gertrude : submit yourself to the guidance—” At that instant the door of the dungeon opened, and Stromfelt stood at the entrance.

“Lady, we must away,” he exclaimed. “The change of the watch is at hand ; the hour is well nigh come : we must away ere suspicion note us.”

Sigrida clung tighter to her father, and buried her face in his bosom.

“Look up, dearest,” urged Ladislaus, “nor rashly endanger the safety of this humane soldier. Bear in mind, compassion is crime in the eyes of Crumpein.”

“A moment—one little moment,” implored Sigrida : but the soldier sprung into the dungeon.

“Lady, my life is threatened : tarry, and all possibility of escape is passed.”

Ladislaus participated in the struggles

of his wretched child, yet he gently strove to consign her to the arm of Stromfelt.

“ Much—much is required of you,” he exclaimed: “ exert your fortitude, my Sigrida: we must not involve the innocent in our calamity.”

“ Enough my father—” and the sorrowing weeping Sigrida became again the heroine. “ Your blessing;” and she bent her knee before him, and then she arose resigned and submissive.

Ladislaus turned aside his face to veil his own anguish; he struggled down the suffocating sob: and when, in lingering tenderness, she paused at the door, “ *Remember,*” he emphatically pronounced, and then it closed upon her receding figure: and with the like precipitance, was she hurried through the dark passages, and resigned at the door of the keep to the further guidance of Ursula.

They neither of them spoke as they crossed the court-yard—Sigrida was absorbed in her own mournful reflections—

Ursula was fearful of trusting her voice to the babbling winds.

Alas! the weight of sorrow was little lightened from the heart of the hapless captive: she had seen—she had conversed with her father; but he had awakened her to the possibility of a forthcoming trial which her own imagination had never before encompassed:—how could she suspect human nature of an extremity so black?—how conjure an evil, whose bare anticipation murdered peace?

“Lady,” said Ursula, as they gained the quiet security of the chamber, “methinks you have reaped sadness instead of content in this stolen visit.”

“Content, Ursula—holy saints! how can content harbour in a fate like mine?”

“Perhaps, not content, lady; but hope oft springs out of heaviest ill. Stromfelt has bound himself your friend, and heaven must side with the lady Gertrude and father Dominick!”

Sigrida could only weep.

"Stromfelt says," resumed Ursula, "that we may command his services: he feels for the poor prisoner, and I am sure he will lend a hand to rescue. You cannot think how he execrates the tyranny which brought you hither; and I'm sure, if he knew how, he would labour hard to expiate the guilt."

"Did Stromfelt aid in the barbarous violence which tore us from the security of our own dwelling?" asked Sigrida—"did he bear me a prisoner from Rustgoden?"

"No, lady, it was not Stromfelt who bore you hither: Stromfelt tarried behind to guard the Swedish prisoner. Alas! it was a deep, deep plan, and I would he had had nought to do in the business; for I do think, he has a good feeling heart, although he is in the service of general Crumpein."

"It was a cruel, an iniquitous plan," exclaimed Sigrida; "a plan, outraging all of law, human and divine."

"A plan, worthy the planner," whispered Ursula. "In Sweden, law is known but by name. Ah, lady! what cares the conqueror for law?—what thinks the conqueror of justice? Crumpein subjugated all law when he strode through the provinces: and when he first beheld you—though you had been the destined spouse of God—his law would have willed you for his own."

"Know you ought, of that fatal, luckless meeting?" questioned Sigrida.

"Yes, I know—I have heard, from that meeting, my lord hovered around Rustgoden: nay, dear lady, he planned to have spirited you away in broad day: but Stromfelt—I grieve to say it was Stromfelt himself, watched your servant; and marked him, at night-fall, in the hamlet, bargaining for a vehicle; and he went straight and reported all to my lord: and he stormed, and he raged most furiously; and the project was all changed; and that very midnight, for fear you should escape him, he——"

"Ah! recall not that dreadful midnight;" and Sigrida turned death-sick at the bare recollection. "Poor—poor Witskey!" yielding to her tears—"he, who would have relinquished life for our preservation; he, who would have purchased our safety with his own! But doubtless he fell in the strife;" and she looked, expecting, yet dreading the answer.

"No, dear lady, not one drop of blood was shed, neither was the dwelling fired."

Sigrida raised her clasped hands—she spoke not, for her whole soul was elevated in fervent grateful adoration! The wreck had not been universal; the gulf had not swallowed all; Hetha yet lived, and the home of happier hours, though desolate, was not despoiled!

Sigrida passed the night in mournful reminiscences; now in the lonely dungeon of her father—now at Rustgoden—now at Saverdsio: alternately, the sport of fancy, and the slave of fear; sometimes buoyed into hope, but oftener sunk

into despondence; now, sensitive as the leaf closing to the touch; now, nerved into active daring intrepidity.

The next day brightened in the renewed assurances of Stromfelt; his protestations of faith; his offers of service; his zealous espousal of a cause, apparently, so forlorn, and so rayless: and the next night brought with it father Dominick: he came with healing in his wing, scattering balm, and inspiring hope and confidence. In the gloom of his monastery, at the altar of his worship, stretched before the holy-rood, and praying for the defenceless and the injured, he had modelled a wild project for deliverance; a visionary scheme for emancipation. Fervent and enthusiastic; the partizan of virtue; a philanthropist, by nature and by habit, he had brooded over it—he had given it credence, until every difficulty vanishing, the effort seemed as comprehensive, and as practicable, as the design was magnanimous: he would rescue

alike father and child; he would consign them to the protection of the lady Gertrude; and for himself, he would endure all of sublunary ill, with quiet uncomplaining submission. Authorized by his spiritual calling, and aided by the relenting favor of Stromfelt, he would visit the gloomy dungeon of the Swedish prisoner; he would muffle him in his habit, and first arranging every plan to facilitate escape, he would tarry in his stead; and force him into freedom, through the unanswerable claims of nature in the preservation of his child.

"And you, you, father," asked the grateful, the wondering Sigrida.

"I will pass the hours of temporary restraint in praying for your safety," replied the monk. "Fear not for me, my daughter: accustomed to the solitude of a religious cell, I will not shrink from the straw bed and coarse fare of your unfortunate father."

"But your life—*holy saints!* should Crumpein, should——"

“Crumpein dares not harm me,” rejoined the man of God: “claimed at his hands by the brethren of my order, opposition or resistance would but entail the fearful ban of the church.”

“Ah! but he may evade, he may mislead; by artful contrivance, by fraud, by well concerted deception, defeating all vigilance, he may doom you to the pangs, his rage and his malice may devise.”

“No, no, my good child, ere the escape be discovered, a messenger from the abbot of my convent, will demand my person. He cannot evade, he cannot mislead: however firm be the bonds of sin, he dares not deprecate a wrath so mortal; he may tamper with secular, but not ecclesiastic authority; he may spread ruin over a whole nation, but he must not tread upon the sacred precincts of the church. Hemmed in by an invulnerable phalanx, the holy pontiff watches with a jealous eye all of incursion or menace: Christiern himself dares not rebel against the sovereign authority; for

what are kings, what are potentates, to Christ's vicar upon earth!"

Still Sigrida bosomed a thousand fears; still her pale cheek betrayed anxiety and apprehension. "We live in an age" she murmured, "when the hardihood of guilt tramples down every barrier; when sin, framing its own laws, scoffs at all of mortal prohibition."

"Religion is immortal and immutable," solemnly pronounced father Dominick; "its stand, above the heavens; its laws, more stable than the base of earth: this globe shall pass away, shall dissolve into vapour, shall return to its original chaos: but religion, emanating from the divine and omnipresent Creator, shall triumphantly ride upon the abyss, when time itself shall be no more! Fear not, my daughter; tyranny may threaten, but tyranny cannot harm one so powerfully protected."

"But should Crumpein be still absent," said Sigrida; "should he not have returned to the fortress; should he——"

" My memory," interrupted the monk, with a placid smile, " records nought to make darkness terrifying: it is the mind at war with itself which fears to be alone: should it prove so, they cannot dispossess of contemplation, neither can they stay the salutary springs of prayer. In this world, we are all the slaves of casualty and chance; but beyond this world, is another, immutable and eternal! Fear not for me. The very lash of the waves will awaken awe and reverence; the very straw, which preserves me from the damp stones, in opening the page of reflection, will excite my gratitude. I shall trace in all the hand of the Deity! He is the element, invigorating my spirit; the mellowing sun, in which my soul joys: prostrate before Him, whether in a cloister or in a dungeon, my heart will erect its own altar, and my offering be as pure, as the holocaust, spiring amid incense and flame."

" Blessed, blessed foretaste of heaven!" asperated Sigrida, as she gazed on the

mild features of the venerable devotee, his sanctity of heart beaming in his eyes, his purity of soul, harmonizing every sound, and augmenting the loveliness of piety!

"All will be so easy; all may be reconciled in a moment," pursued the monk, alive but to the magnanimity of his intentions. "Your father, disguised in my cloak and cowl, will escape through the back postern: he will join you on the sands. Moored amid the rocks, a boat shall be manned in readiness: it will waft you swift across the Categat: and when in north Jutland, the power of the lady Gertrude will protect from further violence. There, sheltered from cognizance; there——"

Sigrida grasped his arm; she shuddered as she spoke, for a mortal fear stole over her. "My father—my dear father, is so sensitive, so tenacious of honor, so alive to the slightest shadow of impeachment. Should he hesitate, should he resist."

The monk mused for a moment, his head bent upon his breast, his hand pressed upon his forehead. "No—no," starting from abstraction, "nature is all-powerful: he cannot resist. I will assail where the heart is most vulnerable—I will magnify the danger—I will paint the whirlwind of passion—I will dwell on the deformity of vice, on the darings of power, until his very soul spurns the bonds which hold him."

"My father is a true patriot," said Sigrida; "my father's breast is the seat of honor! however he may spurn the bonds of Denmark, he would not shift them on a friend to save existence."

"He will—he must," rejoined the monk. "I will assail him with unanswerable argument. I stand unconnected, alone in the universe, without one single bud to blossom in my shelter: whether I die in this fortress, or whether I drop into the grave surrounded by my brethren, is immaterial: for him, he has

urgent claims, he has relative duties to fulfil; a daughter, to rescue from ruin, to uphold, amid the storms and the trials of the world. Doubt it not. I will combat him on every point—I will force him into compliance: and then, will I humble myself to the God of truth, and pray for pardon on the only deception I have deliberately practised throughout my life."

"Oh! but think of his remorse, think of his hereafter repentance," urged Sigrida.

"No remorse, no repentance can arise," quickly rejoined father Dominick. "We shall meet again; we shall meet in comfort and in peace."

"In peace," echoed the weeping girl; "will the blessing of peace ever redawn?—will the fearful scourge of usurping power ever pass from this wretched country?"

"Doubtless," remarked the monk, "the heavy weight of sin warrants the fearful cognizance. We trespass, yet we murmur at the entailed tax. Tyrants, and

conquerors, are but instruments of justice in the hands of God : he exalts, and he debases ; he creates, and he destroys, as seemeth fitting to his unerring wisdom. Sickening at the ill, writhing beneath the pressure, we forget, that since the fall, the world has been one scene of strife and agitation ; that every age has brought its vices and its revolutions : as St. Paul tells us, “ No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” Think it so, believe it so, my poor child, and sorrow will lose half its sting : pour out your full heart at the footstool of grace, and the balm of holiness will heal every wound of your bosom : you will see that eternity is—ought to be the one great aim of existence ; that time and death triumphs over all of earthly power, trampling on thrones, blasting crowns, breaking sceptres ; that all mortal hold is unstable and weak ; that man only lives when he labours after righteousness !”

"Crumpein—wretched, lost Crumpein!" ejaculated Sigrida, and her eye of pity was raised to heaven.

"Christiern too," pronounced father Dominick. "The waste of human blood weighs heavy in the scale of his enormities; the cry of misery swells into thunder; the appeals for redress, the calls for retribution, rise unnumbered as the countless sands! Oh, be grateful, be grateful, my child, and bless God that you are the persecuted! I would not exchange your grievances, and your wrongs, your father's dungeon, and all his festering cares, for the regal purple, for the jewelled crown of Denmark's potent king."

"Oh, no, no!" fervently exclaimed Sigrida, shuddering at the ebon die of crime, "I would not possess, the heart, the soul of Christiern, for all his greatness. And yet, father, he can sleep, he can smile, he can look happy, careless, confiding, as though himself immortal."

"Because he lives the slave of his own

feelings," replied the monk. "Surrounded by a sordid servile crew, hemmed in as it were from himself, yielding to the gratification of his revenge, pampering demoniac passion, and torn by every wild caprice, which can deform man, and turn him to violence and rebellion, his heart lies dead within him: his conscience hardened into stone, he dreams not of the weighty account he must render up at the judgment-seat, where the power of princes shall fail, and sophistry be despoiled of all its subtle varnish; where deeds done in the flesh shall be sifted, and abused administration, and talents squandered, swell the dreadful list of mortal trespass. He sleeps, because he lives like the brute, without reflection; he smiles, because he glories in his own power; he wears the outward show of happiness, because he basks in the sunshine of present prosperity. Let sickness come, let calamity threaten, let fortune but vary her colouring, and behold him, abject, trembling,

lower than the lowest wretch, despoiled by his injustice. But no more of king Christiern; no more of the crooked policy of princes. I must see Ursula—I must learn further of the faith of Stromfelt, ere I return to my convent, to secure and ripen the furtherance of my project."

"Ursula guarantees his truth and his services," said Sigrida.

"Ursula may be influenced by preference," remarked father Dominick; "'tis a blind, often hoodwinking quicker discernment. I should like to question Stromfelt myself."

"Ah, father! think you, will Stromfelt risk the heavy wrath of Crumpein in mercy to a stranger?"

"Stromfelt must know nought of the intended exchange," eagerly resumed the monk: "admitting me as the spiritual consoler of his prisoner, he must not dream the proposed deception: nay, my daughter, let the secret live in your heart and my heart: even Ursula need not be

entrusted with a scheme so precious: she must know of your escape, because she must abet in its furtherance; but let her suppose, let her believe, 'tis I, and I alone, who remove you from the fortress."

"Alas! and must we heap misery, upon Stromfelt, upon Ursula?" asked Sigrida; "must we selfishly entail punishment, where gratitude would award only benefits?"

"Not so," rejoined the holy man. "Let Ursula bear you fellowship; and when day shall have brought the discovery to light, let Stromfelt also fly the dreaded punishment. The lady Gertrude will receive all—will shelter all—her power, as her heart, is capacious: they will find, a kind, a beneficent benefactress; you will find a friend, whose gentleness will sooth your sorrows, whose mild conciliation, whose native urbanity, will soften all your woes: she will shield you from the lawless pursuits of Crumpein, and lure you back to that peace his violence has fright-

ened. Your father too, in security may sojourn in north Jutland: escaping the storm, he may hear the hoarse growling of the distant thunder, and bless his own escape midst the general wreck. Should brighter seasons smile—should prosperity, like the phœnix, spring from her own ashes—should nature yearn to the land of his nativity; he may return to Sweden, and find in her soil, a hallowed grave. But we must be wary, yet rapid in our movements; we must avail ourselves of the absence of the tyrant, nor tarry his return: night and day must we labour, until our project be accomplished; heaven's blessing be upon us, for we toil, to circumvent vice, to rescue virtue!"

Sigrida bowed her head in grateful homage; her heart swelled high; it caught, it clung to the visionary scheme of peace; for

"True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings;
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creature's kings."

Already was she beyond the reach of

Crumpein—already did the pale hue of renovating health animate the eyes, and dapple the wan cheeks of Ladislaus : the pangs of despair, the misery of incertitude, was past and gone: safe hid from the designs of treachery and malevolence, from the pressure of disappointment, and the stings of woe; settled in a new abode, as humble, and as peaceful as Rustgoden—Hetha and Witskey, and all of former friends restored—how could she hail other than content?—how picture ought save felicity? Xavier too floated in the bright dream of her fancy—Xavier, the son of the governor of Calo, summoned by duty from Saverdsio, doomed, like herself, to sojourn in Jutland—Xavier, the preserver of her father;—and her heart quickened, in the wild, the almost shapeless anticipations, which love and hope conjured.

“ I must see Ursula,” exclaimed father Dominick; “ ere I depart this night, I must arrange all ; fearful, lest my appear-

ance should excite suspicion, I must visit the fortress no more."

Sigrida started into reality, into perplexity: the rainbow tints faded, and the dangers, and the difficulties, and the incertitudes of her situation, returned.

"I would fain learn," pursued the monk, "how long Crumpein may be absent—how many hours may be mine to arrange for escape. You must fly, my poor child, beneath the covert of darkness, when sleep shall yet lock up the senses of the garrison; with the first beam of new awakened day, you must depart your prison."

"Would it were this coming morrow!" sighed Sigrida. "Oh, father, but for the grievous tax of your self-sacrifice, deliverance would indeed be bliss!"

"Bliss must ever find its alloy," observed the monk. "Know you not, my daughter"—and his spirit seemed to wing upwards—"earth is not our rest?"

The entrance of Ursula was quick fol-

lowed by the final adjustment for the forthcoming enterprise. She bound herself, by every holy promise, to the fate and fortunes of Sigrida; she would attend her; she would bear her fellowship; she would seek the feet of the lady Gertrude, and dedicate her future years to gratitude and virtue; she would forego all the golden lures of evil, all the brilliant promises of favour; she would live a new life; she would become a new being: and then she hastened to seek Stromfelt; and at her return, all of doubt and uncertainty vanished. That very night, and again towards morning on the third night, would his duty station him as sentinel over the keep: he deplored the misery of the prisoner; he reprobated the severity which prohibited spiritual consolation: a zealous adherent to the rites of Catholic worship, he would admit the confessor; he would aid in the act of grace, as he hoped for aid in his own hour of extreme need.

"Stromfelt is weary of his office, weary of the works of persecution," said Ursula: "like me, he pines to be at peace with his own conscience; and he cannot be at peace, whilst here in the service of general Crumpein. Though in the pay of Denmark, he is not a fit agent for deeds of lawless power; he has a soft heart, and a merciful spirit; and he would exchange all his hopes of favor, for a snug cabin in his own native hamlet: he thinks that spoliation and outrage cannot be acceptable in the sight of heaven; and that however the right of conquest may humble Sweden to the rule of Denmark, every murmur of individual suffering, every record of private wrong, will rise in judgment against her conquerors."

"Would that the like thoughts, that the like feelings, pervaded the minds, and influenced the actions of his superiors!" remarked father Dominick; "then might man, less enslaved by his own passions, less biassed by the dizzy strides of prosperity, live to bless rather than to tyrann-

nize; then might this world become the seat of justice; unanimity, concord might reign triumphant, and virtue find a harbour beneath the skies: but the hour will come—must come, when the brief dream shall close, and the proudest potentate become less than the pious Lazarus whom in life he despised."

" Stromfelt says," observed Ursula, " that as soon as he can withdraw from his station, he will renounce the trade of war, and—"

" Did you reveal ought of intended escape?" interrogated the monk, steadfastly regarding her.

Ursula hesitated; deep crimson suffused her cheeks, and she looked abashed and perplexed. " I only said," she at length faltered out, " it was possible in a little season, we might walk no more on the rampart; that—that—"

" Does Stromfelt know," sternly interrupted father Dominick, " that you are about to quit the fortress?"

" I told him," again hesitatingly pro-

nounced Ursula, “that I wished for content and peace of mind; and that as I could not find either the one or the other in the service of general Crumpein, I—I—”

“ Proceed, confess the extent of your rashness, and then I will see Stromfelt myself, and judge how far we are secure.”

“ Holy father, Stromfelt swore by every saint in the calendar, to be still and silent as the grave. Stromfelt would die rather than betray us.”

“ Betray,” repeated the monk; “ unthinking girl, what have you revealed?”

“ All—all—” and she fell at his feet, and buried her face in her spread hands.

Sigrida, pale and trembling, sunk on a seat, hope yielding to terror, joy to dismay and apprehension. “ Alas! alas! Ursula,” she articulated, “ you have ruined all.”

“ Fear it not, dear lady; our secret is as safe as though locked up in our own

breasts. Stromfelt will only tarry until all dies away, and then he will petition his discharge."

"And if he cannot obtain his discharge?"

"Why then he will escape, like ourselves, and seek happiness in north Jutland."

"I will see Stromfelt," said father Dominick, starting from abstraction.

"Shall I convey him hither?" asked Ursula. "Indeed, indeed, holy father, you will find him faithful and firm to our interest."

"I hope so," said the monk, but his accent was not the accent of confidence.

"I have known Stromfelt," pursued Ursula, "many, many months; ever since I came to this fortress; and I would trust my life, and more than my life, in his keeping: besides, father, he loves me, and love is the firmest bond of faith."

"A subtle, a fallacious bond!" pronounced father Dominick: "but no mat-

ter : go, hasten him hither, that I may learn the ground of our reliance."

The conference was long, but it was satisfactory. Stromfelt appeared the trembling votary of virtue : although his strength was lent to the cause of oppression, he mourned the general desolation, the fatal scourge, which ravaged the riches and the hopes of Sweden ; he execrated the lawless stretch of arbitrary power, condemned the iron rule of Crumpein, and pitied the destined victim of violence and outrage : all of obstacle vanished ; all of fear was lost in his promises of faith ; every position was adjusted ; every movement speedily arranged. On the third night from the present, soon as the faintest glimmer dappled the east, father Dominick was to be admitted to the solitary dungeon of the prisoner : the spiritual communion ended, at the back postern, beneath the shadow of the archway, he was to tarry the arrival of the fugitives ; and quick to convey them to

the boat already provided for their escape. But not once was he to revisit the fortress until the destined hour, lest suspicion awakened in any of the garrison, should mar and counteract the whole design ; he was to remain in his holy sanctuary ; he was to dedicate the intermediate days to prayer ; he was to kneel at the foot of the cross, and supplicate grace and favor upon his humble efforts. The scheme was wild, but it was practicable ; it savoured of romance, but its aim was the preservation of virtue : all of foresight, all of zeal, was embarked in its furtherance ; and although father Dominick had often exclaimed in the words of the sage : “ What is the wisdom of man, when a blast of wind from any part of the compass, may do, or undo in one moment what he has been contriving a whole age ; ” secure in the promises and seeming faith of Stromfelt, he quitted the fortress with hope and confidence in his heart.

It was now that Sigrida felt the grateful thrill of joy ; felt transport even to ecstasy ; all fear, all misery seemed to fade from the future : her father, herself, would alike be snatched from the persevering barbarity of Crumpein ; would hail again the blessing of peace and security : and the pious, the virtuous man, who laboured out their deliverance, shielded by the awful power of the church, he would emerge from the temporary gloom of confinement, and enrich them with his blessing.

The night wore away, but not in sleep ; for oft is joy as wakeful as sorrow : the day too, the intermediate space, teemed with the rich and blissful visions of hope and buoyant fancy : she could look at the keep without bitterness ; she could pace the rampart, she could listen to the gurgling murmur of the waves, without despair. Gratitude and praise lived in her heart ; the name of the pious Dominick was coupled with the name of her father, and ascended in every asperation

of her pure spirit. She could hear—she could smile at the gay anticipations of Ursula; she could follow her through all the winding maze of expectation; she could listen to her waking dreams of competence and peace: all of the past would be obliterated; even the lady Gertrude would respect the sanctity of her new life:—and then she would joy, at the praises, and the enumerated virtues, of the gentle, the unmurmuring being, whom capricious destiny had united to Crumpein; whose excellence, contrasted with the deformity of his mind, and the vicious, the sacrilegious bent of his habits, shone as resplendent, as the meridian glory of the heavens!

“ Yes, I shall see her, I shall know her,” she would say, her genial nature glowing in the promise of unanimity and friendship—“ I shall witness that mild benignity, that unvarying philanthropy, which even here has scattered grace and favor!”

"And you will love her," exclaimed Ursula, "for you will find her worthy to be loved! too good for earth; patient, meek, forbearing, bleeding beneath the crimes of others, yet praying for peace, praying for pardon, on all of erring humanity! Oh, lady! if you had heard her, when I lay mourning and contrite, her pious remonstrances, her assuaging palliatives, her care of the body, her zeal for the soul;—if you had seen the holy balm she scattered, you would say, you would think, with me, if an angel spirit ever animated mortal mould, it is the lady Gertrude!"

The last day of her sojourn in the fortress dawned in mist and gloom—Sigrida, forsaking her pillow, watched the first faint streaks of radiance; the gradual swell, breaking, bursting the bonds of chaos, and rising from ocean's vapoury bed.

"One more day," she sighed, "and borne on yon feathery wave, buoyant,

light as its flaky surf, we shall lose sight of these towers, of these walls ; we shall exchange bonds and affliction for freedom and for peace ! Oh, my God ! ” and she sunk on her knees, and raised her whole soul in gratitude and reverence, “ give us hearts to estimate Thy mercy, to glorify Thy name ! ”

Insensible to the chilling breeze, she stood at the casement, until the tread of feet in the court-yard below, convinced her the bustle of daily occupation was already began ; and then she turned away, fearful of attracting observation, and wrapped in the elysium of hope, awakened no more to reality, until Ursula stood before her.

“ See, lady, a message from father Dominick ; ” and she held forth a folded paper.

Impatient and eager, Sigrida snatched it ; she tore it open, and she read :

“ Circumstances have rendered the delay of a single hour hazardous. Instead

of the ray of morning, we must be content with the darkness of night. Fear not, my daughter; the same Providence will uphold and succour. Ursula too must remain at the fortress, and you must borrow the garb of Ursula, to ensure success. Be of good heart: 'tis the last deception: all is arranged for your deliverance. At midnight, repair, as before fixed, to the back postern, leading to the sands, and bid Ursula tarry in patience, for another revolving sun shall restore her to you. Be silent, and be firm. Strom-felt promises to deliver this written intimation of unavoidable change, lest my visit should be marked. Bless you—bless you, my child! I seek my cell, to pray for success and favor."

"At midnight," said Sigrida, and she read the contents aloud.

Ursula burst into tears.

"I like not this new arragement," she exclaimed; "I like not remaining in the fortress, though it be but for a few hours.

I am sure it would be much better we should go together."

"We are little capable of judging," replied Sigrida. "Doubtless, father Dominick has urgent motives for all he does."

"And will you go without me, lady?" and her tears redoubled.

"How can I hesitate, my poor friend? Father Dominick thinks it fitting, and it is not for us to rebel: besides, does he not say—" and she referred to the note—
"bid Ursula tarry in patience, for another revolving sun shall restore her to you."

"Ah! but he does not explain how I am to join you, and who is to bear me fellowship."

"Perhaps Stromfelt," observed Sigrida, "is entrusted with more than could be written."

"True, lady: I will question him this very moment:" and when she returned, she looked content and happy, every fear calmed, every doubt removed, in the assurances of Stromfelt. He had received

the written document from father Dominick's own hand. To elude all possibility of discovery, until far beyond the reach of pursuit, Sigrida, in the garb of Ursula, was at midnight to repair alone to the back postern: father Dominick would straight convey her to a place of security, where she might sojourn, until joined by Ursula, and then they were to cross the Categat without further delay. All would be arranged for their security and comfort; and Stromfelt, as soon as the watch was exchanged, would himself pilot Ursula from the fortress.

How could she be less than satisfied—how less than happy, in an arrangement so auspicious? Self-love was gratified in the homage of her lover, and every doubt hushed, in the bright promise of safety and success.

Vain would I pourtray the anxiety of this tedious day; vain would I seek to describe, the fears, the suspense, the perturbation, which alternately racked the

mind and spirits of Sigrida; yet did hope rise predominant; hope, dwelling on the deliverance of her father, picturing forthcoming peace.

Not once had the sun broken through his obscuring canopy; gloomy and dark, the mind could borrow nought of cheerfulness from external objects; yet she lingered at the casement, watching the slow advance of evening, and vainly striving, by reason and reflection, to divest herself of the agonizing restlessness, excited by the fears and the dangers attached to such an enterprise. Sometimes, apprehension would heighten the hectic of her cheek, and then again would terror banish every vagrant hue, leaving her as wan and as tintless as the drooping lily, the pure emblem of her innocence! Sometimes, to Ursula she would breathe forth her alarms and her agitation; but oftener, in the true spirit of holiness, would she meekly submit herself and her sorrows to God!

At length the hour, the momentous hour advanced; every stroke of the deep-toned clock quickened the pulses at her heart; she took a hasty leave of Ursula, and carefully disguised in her cloak and bonnet, with an unsteady step descended to the court-yard.

The night was dark; the silence profound, save the hollow moan of the blast, and the hoarse roar of the breakers; not a star twinkled in the firmament; not a ray of moonshine dappled the blank of obscurity; yet did she turn intuitively towards the back postern, nor once did she pause, until she had gained the shelter of its archway.

It was a moment of fate, of almost death-fraught emotion; emotion bordering on anguish; so keen, so exquisite, so overpowering. She grasped an outstretched hand — she distinguished the muffle of the serge cloak — and she clung to it in security and transport, her heart hailing her father, yet her lips uttering no sound.

With the rapidity of fear they passed through the archway ; the gate closed after them, and the next instant, raised from the earth, she was hurried forward : she heard the murmur of voices ; she heard the sound of horse-hoofs on the frozen ground ; and quick as the shifting scene in a drama, as the magic touch of fairy wand, she felt herself lifted in a low vehicle.

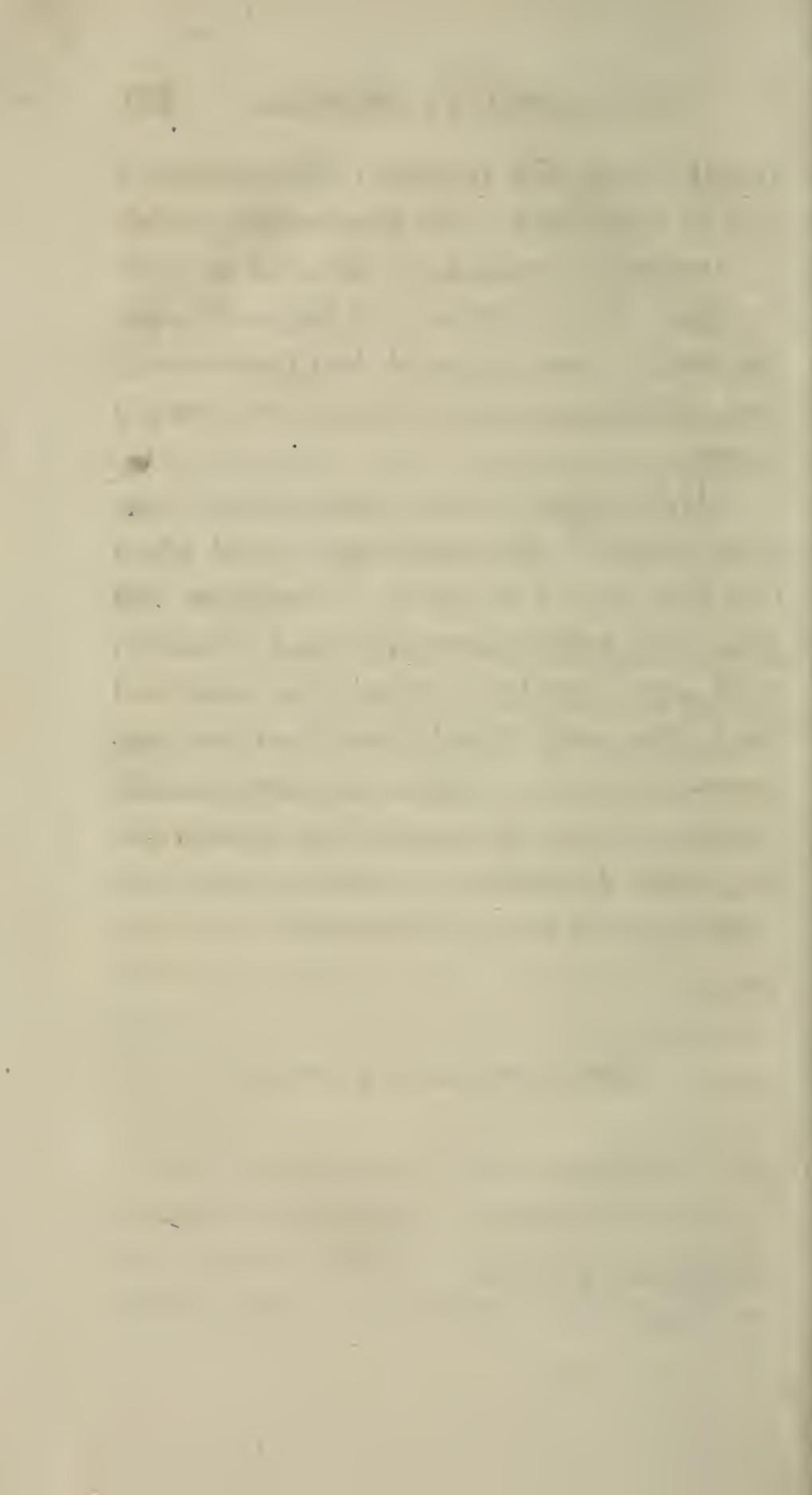
For a long, long interval, she lay in the arms of her preserver, far too happy for words ; every instant bearing her further from the scene of her persecution, and quickening the transports of her emotion. She felt the almost audible throbings of the heart on which she rested—she felt, what she resolved the ardent clasp of gratitude for deliverance—she felt herself strained, growing to the parent bosom.

“ My father! my blessed father,” she at length murmured, and then he clasped her closer. She felt his lips upon her cheek, upon her forehead ; and pure as

vestal saint, she returned his caresses : still he spoke not ; still, incoherently wild, he seemed incapable of thought or collection. She trembled for his health, for his sanity ; she dreaded lest persecution and suffering had shaken the seat of reason.

“ Holy heaven ! my father ! my dear, dear father ! ” she articulated : and when the first ray of morning beamed in the east, half raising herself from his bosom, with one impulsive effort she snatched back the cowl which shrouded his features. It was a sight, blasting, annihilating :—it was not her father ; it was not the friar Dominick ; neither was it a stranger ;—it was—Crumpein !

END OF VOLUME THE THIRD.



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